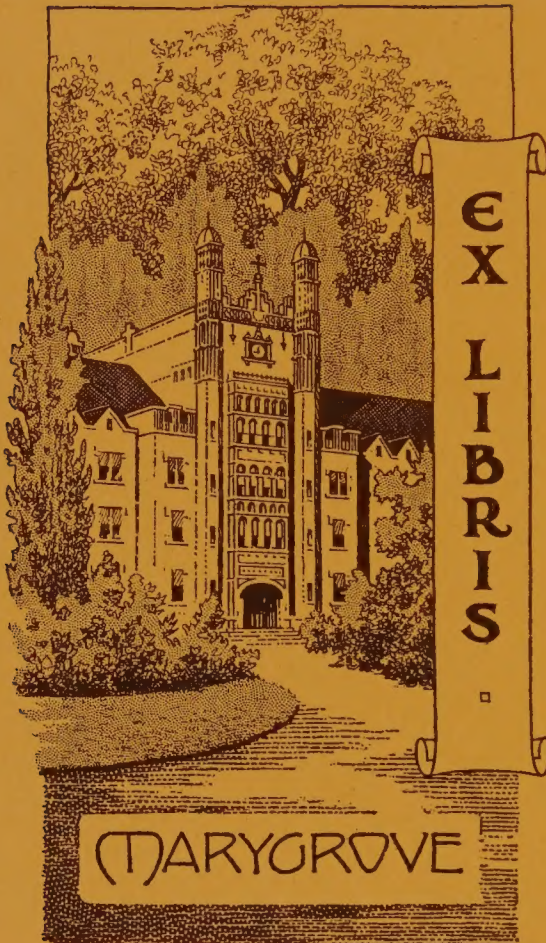
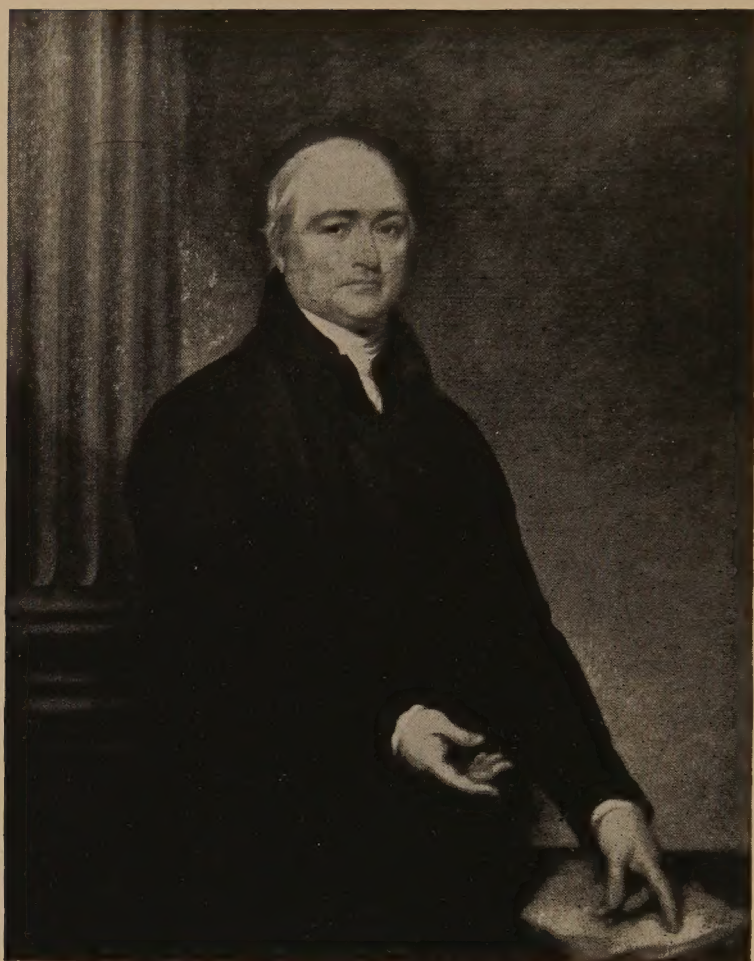




EX
LIBRIS

MARYGROVE

CLASSIC SHADES



TIMOTHY DWIGHT

72.5.7
1183

CLASSIC SHADES

FIVE LEADERS OF LEARNING
AND THEIR COLLEGES

By
M. A. DEWOLFE HOWE



With illustrations

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1928

Copyright, 1928,
By LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

All rights reserved
Published October, 1928

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS PUBLICATIONS
ARE PUBLISHED BY
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY COMPANY

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

20181-5726-88/00

NOTE

THE inquirer into the sources of the historical and biographical facts in the following pages may be referred to the card catalogue of any such adequate library as the Boston Athenæum, where much of this little volume was written. He will need to look not only into books but into many periodicals, both general and academic. And to make the quest complete he must visit each of the five institutions of learning here considered, and enjoy the privilege of talking with officials and graduates of each. For all the help thus secured, and for many personal kindnesses in its bestowal, the most grateful acknowledgment is now made.

The perceptive reader will hardly need to be told that the title, "Classic Shades," has been chosen for its application both to places and to persons.

M. A. DEW. H.

BOSTON, 1 *May*, 1928

CONTENTS

I	TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE	I
II	MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE .	41
III	MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS .	79
IV	PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH .	121
V	THE HARVARD FIGURE OF CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT	163

ILLUSTRATIONS

TIMOTHY DWIGHT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From a portrait by John Trumbull</i>	
MARY LYON	50
<i>From an engraving after a miniature, 1832</i>	
MARK HOPKINS	100
<i>From a photograph</i>	
JAMES McCOSH	144
<i>From a photograph</i>	
CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT	186
<i>From a photograph by Notman, 1899</i>	

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER,
OF YALE

I

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE

THERE was a club dinner not long ago at which the speakers were two presidents of old New England colleges and a graduate of one of them who eulogized the "prex" of his own earlier day. In the promiscuous talk that followed, a visiting professor from England remarked that the speeches of the evening made one very clear impression upon him — namely, that if somebody would picture for the student of American life the great figures of certain American college presidents he would make a positive and unique contribution to an understanding of our civilization.

Here was a challenge which might have passed unheeded had the task it implied not beckoned with a promise of interest both for him who should take it up and conceivably for many readers. It was a challenge, moreover, which readily expanded itself into a prompting to something more than a series of biographical

CLASSIC SHADES

papers. Why should not an attempt be made not only to picture one by one the personalities and achievements of eminent leaders, but also to consider the separate contributions made by the colleges with which they were associated to the general stream, the effectual tendencies, of American life? If our "higher education" and the persons and institutions that have dominated it are responsible for any determining elements in our civilization, it is certainly worth while to step aside from the present overwhelming rush of things and consider these elements in their personal and academic sources. Such, then, is the general aim of the undertaking here begun.

Certainly the American college, always an object of the unique affection and devotion of its children, holds to-day more than ever before a place of its own in American life. The capacity revealed by our college youth in the World War, the high quality of its service, doubtless contributed to the enormously increased resort to colleges and universities which has marked the decade now ending. The general diffusion of prosperity—enabling families

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE that would not have thought of college for their children in previous times to say, "Our boys and girls are going to have the best in education"—has played its part. Never before has the American college meant so much to so large a proportion of our population.

And the college president? So recently as in the summer of 1926 the death of Charles William Eliot, for forty years President of Harvard, for seventeen its President Emeritus, brought home to Americans in general the magnitude of the place which one in his post could occupy. Generally acclaimed as "the foremost citizen of America," it must be remembered that he won this title through the performance of his duties, immediate and related, as a college president. Dr. George E. Vincent, long President of the Rockefeller Foundation, wrote several years ago respecting the ideal head of an American university: "To judge from academic and public expectations, a president should be a scholar, teacher, organizer, authority on education, administrator, financier, writer, orator, judge of men, leader, inspirer of youth, publicist, diplomatist, man of the world,

CLASSIC SHADES

moral idealist." This indeed is not an overstatement, and if these specifications are not met by all our college presidents there is a saying of Professor Gildersleeve's, of Johns Hopkins, quoted by Dr. Vincent, which accounts for the discrepancy: "There is only one thing to be done; we must improve the breed of archangels."

It is with the "breed of archangels" — at least in the public rating — that a scrutiny of college presidents must concern itself. Men like Mark Hopkins of Williams, McCosh of Princeton, Eliot of Harvard, the Dwights — especially the elder Timothy — of Yale, have exerted, through their colleges, an influence upon American life which no such scrutiny can measure to the full.

I

If Yale and Timothy Dwight — grandfather of the later Yale president of the same name — take precedence here of other topics, it is because Dwight, in the order of time, stands first among the men to be considered. Yale, on the contrary, came into being as an offspring of

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE
Harvard, after the Massachusetts college had been ministering to New England for nearly seventy years. In the decade before the establishment of Yale, moreover, William and Mary College had begun its work in Virginia, placing Yale third in antiquity among American colleges.

The college at New Haven would indeed have opened its doors long before it did if certain ministers in New Haven and other towns of the present Connecticut could have had their way. Through the earliest years of their settlements, they realized that New England could not be expected to maintain more than one college, and sent their boys to Harvard, and paid their toll of "the College corn," levied for "the relief of poor scholars at the college at Cambridge," with the best of good grace. As the seventeenth century wore on and their resources increased, there was also a growth in the spirit of liberalism in religious matters at Harvard — "latitudinarianism," for those who like longer and vaguer words — which disturbed the supporters of the Simon-pure New England theology, such as the Mather minority in Massachusetts and the orthodox majority in Connecticut. Even after

CLASSIC SHADES

Yale was founded Cotton Mather, addressing especially the two New England colleges, could be heard to exclaim, of "most academies of this world," that "the philosophy taught in them is nothing but *foolosophy*." The first steps towards the founding of Yale, taken by strictly orthodox ministers, most of whom were graduates of Harvard, acting on the advice of other graduates nearer to Cambridge and representing the more conservative theology, were directed towards the setting up of an academy in support of the old order. Alongside all this there was, of course, the strong and constant impulse to avoid the expense and extreme difficulty of sending Connecticut boys to a Massachusetts college.

It seems to have been in 1701 — though some historians place the event late in 1700 — that each one of ten ministers gathered in the town of Branford placed certain books on a table in the midst of them, saying, "I give these books for the founding of a College in this Colony." It was certainly in 1701 that the General Assembly in New Haven, on petition of these ministers, voted a charter for "a Collegiate School . . . wherein Youth may be instructed in the Arts

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE and Sciences who through the blessing of Almighty God may be fitted for public employment both in Church and Civil State.” The term “collegiate school” was deliberately chosen instead of “college” to avoid the risk of interference on the part of the British Government. “We on purpose gave your academy as low a name as we could,” one of the reverend petitioners was informed, “that it might the better stand in wind and weather.”

The “collegiate school” received no local habitation by the 1701 Act of the New Haven Assembly, but until 1716 led a wandering life in the Connecticut towns — Wethersfield, East Guilford, Milford, and Saybrook — where the rector and tutors were settled. A bitter dispute, especially between the partisans of New Haven and Hartford as the permanent site for the academy, was brought virtually to an end in 1716 by a majority vote of the trustees in favor of New Haven, and by the immediate application of the slender funds at their command to the building of a house for the school in that town. How it was all to be paid for remained a difficult question until the trustees received

CLASSIC SHADES

from England a gift — though less than £600, the largest private benefaction that was to come for more than a century — which saved the day and called the name of “Yale College” into being. This gift had not come without a careful preliminary cultivation of a “prospect” in the person of Elihu Yale, native of Boston, son of an original settler of New Haven, and possessed in later life of an ample fortune accumulated, by whatever methods, as agent of the East India Company at Madras and governor of the trading post of Fort St. George. It was only decent to give the new hall the name of “Yale College,” and before long to extend that name to the institution as a whole; for Cotton Mather, at odds with Harvard, had addressed to the childless Elihu Yale in London an appeal for funds, containing this strong intimation of consequences from a favorable response: “Sir, though you have your felicities in your family which I pray God may continue and multiply, yet certainly, if what is forming at New Haven might wear the name of Yale College, it would be better than a name of sons and daughters and your munificence might easily obtain for you

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE such a commemoration and perpetuation of your valuable name, which would indeed be much better than an Egyptian pyramid." With this adroit begging Mather coupled the assurance to Yale and his family that "a good people" might be expected "to make mention of you in their prayers to the glorious Lord." There was, besides, a constant pressure upon him from one Jeremiah Dummer, a Massachusetts colony agent in London, himself a graduate of Harvard, whose zeal for the infant college bore other fruits than those to which the name of Yale was joined.

These fruits took form especially in gifts of books from contemporary shining lights in English letters — a set of *Tatlers* and *Spectators* from Richard Steele himself, a copy of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia* from the distinguished author, and other volumes hardly less notable. By the time the College was established at New Haven, these and other books which had accumulated in Saybrook numbered more than a thousand. Their removal was the occasion of a veritable "Battle of the Books," calling forth the energies of a sheriff and a conflict with the

CLASSIC SHADES

people of Saybrook in which wheels were removed from oxcarts, bridges were destroyed to impede the transfer, and some two hundred and fifty volumes, besides valuable papers, were irretrievably lost. The thousand volumes that were saved are still among the treasures of the Yale College Library.

Other bits of color in the early history of Yale are provided by the fact that the "college" named for the first substantial benefactor appears on the evidence of an old New Haven map to have been painted a prophetic blue, and that the house built for the first rector chosen for the institution after its concentration in New Haven — the Reverend Timothy Cutler, whose turning from the colonists' forms of faith to episcopacy brought his rectorship to an untimely and sensational end — was built, at least in part, from the proceeds of a special import duty on rum. These tinted beginnings were nevertheless followed in general by a long period of adherence to rigid standards of orthodoxy, which went far to fix the character of the college over which Timothy Dwight was to be placed as the eighteenth century neared its close. The spirit of

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE conformity thus achieved soon began to receive significant illustrations.

One of them, in the college year of 1741-42, was the dismissal of David Brainerd, who afterwards became so notable a missionary to the Indians that the great Jonathan Edwards made him the subject of a biography. Brainerd's offense was that he said of Tutor Whittelsey, after he had prayed in a college company, "He has no more grace than this chair." An abject written confession of wrongdoing — "I humbly confess that herein I have sinned against God and acted contrary to the Rules of his Word," with much besides — could not save him from expulsion by Rector Clap and the Trustees. A similar case was that of the Cleaveland brothers, John and Ebenezer, devoutly pious youths of the time of the Great Awakening under the preaching of George Whitefield. Visiting their parents in the town of Canterbury, they listened, as these parents were doing, to a New Light instead of an Old Light preacher. On their return to New Haven they were summoned before the college authorities to answer for their wickedness, and because they would not declare publicly that

CLASSIC SHADES

they had acted "in violation of the laws of God, and of the colony, and of the college," they were expelled. Through such incidents the Blue Laws of Connecticut and the color of Yale fall into a natural association.

In the enforcement of conformity the students themselves played a part hardly less important than that of the authorities. It was the duty of the seniors, under a definite set of eighteenth-century regulations, "to teach freshmen the laws, usages, and customs of the college." From one regulation the spirit of them all may be deduced: "When a Freshman is near a Gate or Door, belonging to College or College-Yard,¹ he 'shall look around and observe whether any of his Superiors are coming to the same; and if any are coming within three rods, he shall not enter without a signal to proceed." This was one of their milder rules. The nature of some of the others may be inferred from an observation made by a college contemporary of Dwight's: "I can't help laughing when I see the poor Fresh-

¹ The term "Yard," still preserved at Harvard, survived at Yale well into the nineteenth century, when it was supplanted by "Campus."

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE men creeping down stairs without the least noise, from the lash of their superiors. Freshmen have attained almost the happiness of negroes."

To avoid any possible loose ends of discipline, there was a college rule to the effect that any point not covered by the regulations of Yale should fall under those of Harvard. In one matter in which the two colleges followed a common practice, — that of arranging the class lists in accordance with the social precedence of parents, — it should be said that Yale abandoned this method several years earlier than Harvard — in 1768 instead of 1777. Nor has Harvard preserved any better instance of the workings of the method than the story of the Yale student who won a high place on the list by announcing simply of his father — a shoemaker — that he was "on the bench."

For all the resemblances between the two oldest colleges of New England, the tendencies at Harvard towards diversity and at Yale towards that singleness of character which the very founding of the younger institution was intended to emphasize marked their development through the eighteenth century, as they

CLASSIC SHADES

continued to do through the nineteenth. Nearly equal in the size of their graduating classes, they marched along under the presidency of Dwight's immediate predecessor, Ezra Stiles — "both a living polyglot and a living encyclopedia" — who on one commencement day is said to have delivered a morning oration in Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Arabic, and an afternoon discourse in Latin. Under Timothy Dwight, 1795-1817, the number of Yale graduates was slightly in excess of the number graduated at Harvard. By the end of his term of office the sister colleges were stamped with their distinctive characteristics. But what of Timothy Dwight himself?

II

When a man is defined by his predecessor in office as "His Loftiness," in common parlance as "Old Pope Dwight," and by a single shrewd observer as "a Yankee Christian gentleman — nothing more, nothing less," it is manifest that he is something of a character. All three definitions have their fitness. The last of them is appropriate to a grandson of Jonathan Edwards — though, with Aaron Burr as another grand-

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE son, its accuracy was not of the inevitable sort. The name of Timothy Dwight, however, holds a conspicuous place in the extraordinary list of descendants of Edwards who have achieved distinction in American life.

He was born on May 14, 1752, at Northampton, Massachusetts, where his father, a graduate of Yale, occupied a respectable place as a merchant. His mother was the third daughter, Mary, of Jonathan Edwards, and possessed remarkable abilities and character. Dissenting from the common belief that children who could speak should not immediately learn to read, she taught him the alphabet, at a single lesson, when first he could talk, so that before he was four he could read the Bible "with ease and correctness." At six he was sent to a grammar school, the master of which was charged to withhold him for a time from the study of Latin. Vain precaution! The infant zealot managed to possess himself of the books of the older boys while they were at play, and before the master found him out had gone twice through Lily's Latin Grammar. At this point father and teacher gave up, and he was allowed to proceed, which he did —

CLASSIC SHADES

at a rate which would have prepared him to enter college at eight had he not been removed from the school, to pursue his studies at home under his mother's guidance.

Here he performed precocious labors in history and geography, and after a final year — his twelfth — under a learned minister at Middletown, entered Yale College in 1765, at thirteen. It was not to be expected that such excesses of study as those in which the young Dwight had indulged could escape their penalty. Having anticipated two years of college work by his reading of the classics, he fell, through involuntary idleness, into the vice of gambling. We are informed, however, that in no instance did those who led him astray "influence him to play for money, or to stake even a farthing." Through the efforts of his tutor, a kinsman,

Young Timothy
Learnt sin to fly,

but only to plunge more deeply than ever before into the extravagances of study. It was the Spartan practice of the time to hold the morning chapel service at 5.30 in winter and 4.30 in summer. Dwight set himself the task of con-

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE struing and parsing at least a hundred lines of Homer before prayers. This work by candle-light doubtless contributed to the lifelong weakness of his eyes, which imposed upon the prolific authorship of his maturity the handicap of an amanuensis. While still in college he is reported to have developed a penmanship through which his writing "was with difficulty distinguished from the handsomest engravings" — a wasted accomplishment for one obliged to resort to dictation, and imperfectly sustained, if one may judge by specimens of his manuscript preserved in the Library of Yale University.

It was at this period also that our academic Admirable Crichton began to write poetry and music. The patriotic and religious fervor of his "Columbia," of his Biblical epic, *The Conquest of Canaan*, — Homeric, *longo intervallo*, by way of Pope, — and of his *Greenfield Hill*, an extended rhapsody on Connecticut and the New World, have faded even, on certain pages, to absurdity with the passage of time. The flattering dedications of the two longer poems, respectively, to Washington and John Adams availed less to save them than now to remind the reader that as

CLASSIC SHADES

Dwight's life was nearing its end he made the public confession, "I have courted reputation and influence to a degree which I am unable to justify." Little could he have foreseen that as a poet his passport to remembrance would consist exclusively of the familiar hymn, "I love thy kingdom, Lord." His musical compositions seem to have disappeared even more completely than his verse, in spite of Benjamin Silliman's word for it that "he composed an anthem, adapted to Dr. Watts' version of the XCII Psalm, and it may not be improper to mention, even in this serious connection, that he composed music for several of his smaller poetical productions."

In the twenty-six years between Dwight's graduation at Yale in 1769 and his succession to the presidency of the college in 1795, he led a varied and fruitful life. From school-teaching in New Haven he passed, in 1771, to a tutorship in Yale College. At this time he became so jealous of his working hours that he attempted to reduce the necessity of exercise by an abridgment of his diet, which he brought down to twelve mouthfuls at dinner and then to vegetable

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE food in slender quantities. Again there was a penalty to pay, in the form of ill health, restored only by recourse to that extensive practice of walking and riding which bore fruit in the four volumes of his *Travels in New England*, his best remembered, and deservedly valued, book, in which it were profane — though not wholly fantastic — to discern a serious forerunner of that British philosopher, traveling notebook in hand, Mr. Pickwick.

From his Yale tutorship Dwight, after suppressing a students' petition to make him president of the college, — at twenty-two, — took a chaplaincy in the Continental Army, and saw something of service, and of General Washington, for a year, at the end of which the death of his father in the South forced upon him the conduct of the family farm at Northampton, and the care of his mother and her younger children. It was in this period that the hired men in the hayfield strove one against the other for the privilege of mowing next to Dwight — “to hear him talk.” It was about then also that, in 1777, he married Mary Woolsey, a daughter of his father's college roommate. With

CLASSIC SHADES

farming, school-teaching, "supplying" in neighboring pulpits, representing Northampton in the Massachusetts legislature, — where, on one occasion, he entered the lists as the effectual champion of Harvard in a plea for financial aid, — in a wide variety of useful employments, he passed the years until 1783, when he began the pastorate in the Connecticut town of Greenfield that occupied him for the twelve years remaining before he became president of Yale.

While Dwight was at Greenfield he added to his repute as preacher, scholar, and poet the fame of a successful teacher, for he founded and conducted an academy for both sexes which, according to so eminent a scientist as Benjamin Silliman, transformed "the beautiful, though formerly obscure, village of Greenfield Hill" into "a little Athens," destined to be visited by strangers "as in England they resort to Twickenham and Kew." Contemporary fame evoked amazing prophecies. In the case of Dwight its retroactive force endured for nearly half a century; even in the sixties an admirer, the Reverend W. B. Sprague, was declaring, of his *System of Theology*, that "it is destined to

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE
be eagerly and admiringly read by the light of
the millennial age," as in the forties he had pre-
dicted, of Dwight's "Columbia," that it "is
never likely to go out of date until the funeral
obsequies of American liberty shall have been
celebrated."

It was easy for those who fell under the in-
fluence of Dwight in the flesh to place him high
in the scale of human beings. Whether or not
they exaggerated his powers, absolute rather
than relative, it was a great thing for the small
and indigent college that Yale still was when
Dwight came to it to identify with its fortunes
a man whose figure held so commanding a place
in the eyes of his contemporaries. Very much a
man of his time, — an ardent patriot, strongly
of the Federalist faith, a pillar of conservatism
in questions of religion, morals, and manners, —
he was, besides, gifted with intellectual and
spiritual powers, and with a force of personality
that enabled him to give a distinctive direction
to the Yale of his own time and of the years
that followed.

An impressive personal appearance was one
of Dwight's fortunate endowments. "His

CLASSIC SHADES

form," says a biographer, "was stately and majestic, and every way well proportioned. His features were regular; his eye black and piercing, yet benignant." His smile, says another who knew him, was irresistible. "When he spoke," the same observer writes, "others were silent. This arose in part from the superiority of his powers, but in part also from his manner, which, as I have said, was somewhat authoritative. Thus he engrossed, not rudely, but with the willing assent of those around him, the lead in conversation." One sees why he was called "Pope Dwight," and acquired a reputation, like that of Dr. Holmes in Boston at a later day, of suffering interruptions not at all gladly.

The impact of such a personality upon the college under him, a college of only a hundred and ten students, with one professor and three tutors as the whole teaching force when Dwight took office, was sure to be resounding. It counted for the more because he undertook, in addition to the duties of the presidency, the entire instruction of the senior class, and the professorships of belles-lettres and oratory, and of theology. The sermons he preached in the

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE College Chapel through a long term of years provided the material, reduced to writing by faithful student amanuenses, for the five volumes of *Theology Explained and Defended* which were posthumously printed. Another and smaller work, *President Dwight's Decisions of Questions Discussed by the Senior Class in Yale College in 1813 and 1814*, "from Stenographic Notes by Theodore Dwight, Jr.," not published until 1833, is more to the present point.

When Dwight "commenced President," as they would have said in 1795, the relaxation of earlier standards of thought and conduct that ensued upon the War of Independence had acquired a fresh momentum from the French Revolution. The spirit of infidelity that prevailed in France was among the most fashionable of importations, and, like many fashions from abroad, it was adopted especially by the young. Lyman, the father of Henry Ward Beecher was a student at Yale when Dwight became president. In his *Autobiography* he wrote: "Most of the class before me were infidels, and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, etc., etc. They thought the faculty

CLASSIC SHADES

were afraid of free discussion. But when they handed Dr. Dwight a list of subjects for class disputation, to their surprise he selected this: 'Is the Bible the word of God?' and told them to do their best. He heard all there was to say, answered them, and there was an end. He preached incessantly for six months on the subject, and all infidelity skulked and hid its head."

The book of *Decisions* for the two years of 1813 and 1814 is more concerned with social and political than with theological questions. For characteristic utterances on infidelity, and the France which bred it, — together with the Jeffersonian state of mind so loathsome to a Federalist like Dwight, — one has only to look at some of his many printed sermons. Take this passage from one of them — a passage entirely typical of Dwight's vigor of expression and of the conservative temper of his time: "The spirit of infidelity has the heart of a wolf, the fangs of a tyger, and the talons of a vulture. Blood is its proper nourishment: and it scents its prey with the nerves of a hound, and cowers over a field of death on the sooty pinions of a fiend. Unlike

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE all other animals of prey, it feeds upon its own kind, and, when glutted with the blood of others, turns back upon those who have been its co-adjutors, and who, if either its disposition, or its measures, could admit of friendship, would have been its friends." In the same sermon France appears as "a kind of suburb to the world of perdition The touch of France is pollution. Her embrace is death." Even in his *Travels in New England* he declared that France, during the Revolution, exhibited "the strongest resemblance to Hell, which the human eye in this world has ever been permitted to behold." His denunciations of the "striplings" who embraced its doctrines set a high standard of virulence for attacks upon "the younger generation" in any age. It is hardly surprising that "infidelity skulked and hid its head." The astonishing thing is that the respectable nineteenth century in America could have grown from such debased beginnings as those which Dwight set himself to combat.

From the *Decisions* many significant utterances on a great variety of topics might be drawn. One of the questions — no longer open

CLASSIC SHADES

to debate in this day of the Yale School of Drama — was “Are Theatres Beneficial?” In his deliverances under this head are found such sentences as, “I have never read a comedy which a Christian could read without pain, except one: that is *The Heiress* by General Burgoyne”; and this — “I know of no play in existence, which ought to be perused by St. Paul.” Another characteristic bit — more forward-looking, like Dwight himself in extending the advantage of his Academy at Greenfield Hill to girls as well as to boys — was his declaration, “It is owing to the innate good sense of the women of this country that they are not absolute idiots.” And typically vigorous was his programme for dealing with “fashionable, gay people who are absolute nullities as to any benefit they ever confer on other men I would administer the Holland remedy: put them into a cistern and let in a stream of water; and if they would not pump it out they might drown.”

These are but random illustrations of Dwight as a man of his time at Yale: a pillar of orthodoxy and conservatism, capable of commanding both the admiration and the affection of his

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE contemporaries young and old. With all his dignities, there is something attractive — and suggestive of his personal relations with students — in his reported saying, “I would rather be sometimes cheated than not to trust in those around me”; and it is to the credit of his perceptions that, after an argument with John C. Calhoun, while a Yale undergraduate, on the relative merits of Federalism and Republicanism, he declared that “the young man had talent enough to be President of the United States,” which he accompanied by a prediction (not so far from fulfillment) that “he would one day attain that station.” A study of his qualities and powers contributes at many turns to an understanding of the conforming, unified Yale of the century that followed him.

On that century in Yale he exerted an influence not merely spiritual. Under his rule, and doubtless owing in large measure to his estimation among the faithful throughout the country, the College was increased, roughly, from one hundred to three hundred in the number of its students. Petty practices of fagging and pecuniary fines were abolished. A vision of at least

CLASSIC SHADES

an approach to the future university shaped itself in his mind. The Yale School of Medicine took form during his administration, and, though separate departments of theology and law were not established until later, his foresight anticipated and prepared the way for them, just as the sagacious acquisition of land in New Haven provided, under his régime, for the physical growth of the college. Early in his presidency he appointed to professorships three young men whom he had known as students, Benjamin Silliman in Chemistry and Natural History, Jeremiah Day, Dwight's successor as President, in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and James L. Kingsley, in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Languages. Naturally surviving him, they carried his policies far into the nineteenth century. Through Silliman in particular, as perhaps the foremost American scientist of his time, Dwight may truly be said to have established at Yale the drift towards scholarship in science which has so distinguished the second half of the history of the college. This fact is the more notable because Dwight himself was primarily a theologian. It is indeed

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE
but one token of the many-sidedness of his
interests.

When Timothy Dwight, at sixty-four, came to die, the ending of his life was in thorough keeping with its course throughout. The fight against feeble health and wretched eyesight continued to the last. The greatest courtesy and consideration for those about him marked his final days, on one of which he completed a poem of some fifteen hundred lines on "Genius and Common Sense," exclaiming, "There, I have done!" On January 11, 1817, he died, having set his college clearly on its way towards its destined distinction as a national university.

III

The history of an institution has been likened — perhaps too frequently — to the elongated shadow of a man. Yale has had too long a history for the shadow of any one man to affect it all. But the elder Timothy Dwight stood virtually at the mid-point of that history, with most of the eighteenth century behind him when he began his work, and, when it was done, with much of the nineteenth, and the years that have followed,

CLASSIC SHADES

stretching ahead. In his day of more than a hundred years ago he may certainly be said to have shadowed forth both the past and the future.

Inclusive as his intérésts were, religion and theology were of course the subjects of his special devotion. It is a significant fact that under the last of the successive revivals that swept the college during his presidency, the students themselves petitioned for a suspension of all college exercises in order that they might apply their thoughts exclusively to religion. Dwight's sense of proportion caused him to deny this request. Yet the state of mind it represented was characteristic, in the large, of the nineteenth-century as it had been of the eighteenth-century Yale. It was not until the twentieth century had begun that the Corporation, the final governing body of the university, so changed its make-up that Protestant clergymen no longer constituted a majority of its members. For nearly twenty years from 1833 onward even the treasurer of the college was a minister.

The historians of Yale are entirely agreed that conservatism holds a high place among its

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE characteristics. The most powerful religious bodies — for example, the Church of Rome — are the strongest agents of conservatism in general. In particular at Yale the force of religion — and of conformity to the religious standards of time and place — has doubtless contributed much to the conservative temper of the college. It has already been seen how Dwight routed the young infidels of his day. "In Connecticut," wrote one of his many admirers, alluding so late as 1857 to the "new philosophy" of an earlier day, "it ceased to be fashionable or even reputable; and the religion of the Pilgrims, which was fearfully threatened with extermination, regained its respectability and influence." Even so near our own time as 1914 the Reverend Anson Phelps Stokes has written of Yale: "The typical graduate has the believing attitude of mind A Yale atheist, or a Yale cynic, or a Yale pessimist, is rarely found." To these confident words a few others, written by George Santayana, when he was a young instructor in philosophy at Harvard in 1892, and had just paid an enjoyable visit to New Haven, may be added: "Yale has a religion. The solution of the greatest

CLASSIC SHADES

problems is not sought, it is regarded as already discovered. The work of education is to instill these revealed principles and to form habits congruous with them. Everything is arranged to produce a certain type of man" — which may be, after all, another way of speaking to the same purpose with Mr. Stokes.

Besides the elements of conservatism and faith which Mr. Stokes has enumerated as essential in the historic life of Yale, he names also democracy and constructive activity. Democracy — if it means, as it should, the equality of opportunity — is the boast of every American college. In so far as it represents a row of classmates sitting together on a fence, and holding as a conscious goal through the first three years of college the hope of election to a senior society, with the sense of dazzling recognition or blank obscurity which may come at the last, it has undoubtedly played a part of its own in the making of "Yale men." The Yale man himself will tell you that the standard on which the elections to these senior societies are based is that of ideal democracy; and the hours passed within the impenetrable walls of their little citadels appear

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE to be counted, by young and old, the most profitable and happy that the bright college years can bestow. To an outsider that aspect of democracy which relates it closely to coöperation, and thus to the "constructive activity" of which Mr. Stokes has spoken, seems of more significance. "The word 'together,'" says another historian of the college, "is the great word at Yale." And so it is. On so shrewd an observer as Mr. Santayana — and be it said that his visit to Yale in 1892 was that of an admiring and sympathetic observer — this "togetherness" obviously made a strong impression. "The relations of one Yale student to another," he wrote, "are relatively simple and direct. They are like passengers in a ship or fellow countrymen abroad; their sense of common interests and common emotions overwhelms all latent antipathies. They live in a sort of primitive brotherhood, with a ready enthusiasm for every good or bad project, and a contagious good humor."

This was thirty-five years ago, when all American emotions were more transparent. Even yesterday a younger Princeton man, Mr. Edmund

CLASSIC SHADES

Wilson, was writing: "At Yale, the eccentric or noncompetitive man, who might be happy at Princeton or Harvard, is likely to be juggernauted by the machine and acquire little but an extreme bitterness." This is probably less true to-day than it was in Mr. Wilson's yesterday when the resented process of converting a "beer college" into a "tea college" had not acquired the momentum appearing in the latest color and diversity of undergraduate life. It is nevertheless significant that the sense of solidarity at Yale, of what might even be called "Yale-land über Alles," goes on expressing itself not only in the lusty singing of the college song with no sense of anticlimax in its final line, "For God, for Country, and for Yale," but through the carving of these words in stone, secure against the envious hand of time, over the doorway of the superb Gothic tower of the Harkness Memorial.

It is precisely through this spirit of conformity to a common ideal, this product of democracy on the way to constructive activity, that Yale and Yale men have made their remarkable record of achievement. The record is as typi-

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE
cally American as Yale itself has always been.
“It did not move too fast,” President Hadley
once wrote of its development, “for the people
of the United States as a whole.” An ideal of
force and vigor has been one of its historic pos-
sessions. For many years before 1840 the hero
of the undergraduates was the “College Bully,”
a son of Anak to whose custody through his
senior year a gigantic club of mythic origin was
entrusted. That his leadership, including the
free use of his bludgeon on town-and-gown
fights, was often moral as well as physical ap-
pears in the record that one famous College
Bully became Chief Justice of Louisiana, and
another, who led the college choir, an early mis-
sionary to the Sandwich Islands. “Our Alma
Mater,” writes Mr. Stokes, “has been more
conspicuous for *fortiter in re* than for *suaviter in
modo*.”

In all the story of Yale there is a hearty Ameri-
can quality that accounts for many things —
including its prowess in athletic contests. When
James Russell Lowell wrote severely of the Yale
poet, James Gates Percival, there was a note of
pathos in the cry of Professor Beers, “Why could

CLASSIC SHADES

they not leave us our one little ewe lamb — they of the abundant mutton?” But if Yale has not bred so many poets and other men of letters as have sprung from her older sister at Cambridge, she may well pride herself on having provided from her roll of scholars the first presidents of nineteen American colleges and universities that were established between 1747 and 1891 — from Princeton to the University of Chicago. The scholar in action, the administrator and leader, the conservator and ambassador of academic tradition, has had a large and honorable representation among the sons of Yale. And in many other fields — perhaps chiefly those of science and the Christian ministry — its contribution of effective leaders in American life and thought could be substantiated by impressive lists of names.

There is a story to the effect that the Hebrew characters on the Yale shield, signifying “Light and Truth,” were once copied by an unskillful painter whose slight, unwitting changes in them caused them to mean something like “Blasphemers and Farmers.” Now that what is called “the New Yale” fills so large a segment

TIMOTHY DWIGHT, THE ELDER, OF YALE

in the academic horizon, it behooves one to remember that misinterpretations are easy. It is a simple matter to go astray, with records already filed for reference. When it comes to a fermenting present and an unpredictable future, one must be vigilant indeed. President Lowell of Harvard is fond of telling a story which bears upon the present. It is the story of twin brothers, entirely undistinguishable in nursery and school. When they grew to college age, one went to Yale, the other to Harvard. One became a typical Yale "go-getter," the other a typical Harvard dilettante — and still you could n't tell them apart!

In the general standardization of American life, our colleges and the young men and women who resort to them are doubtless growing steadily more and more alike. But the physical and financial splendors of the new Yale — with its new buildings of majestic beauty and its rapidly growing resources, with its new President, Dr. James R. Angell, the first since Thomas Clap (1740-66) who has not himself been a graduate of Yale — can hardly subdue the spirit of adaptation to American needs which has characterized

CLASSIC SHADES

the college for more than a century. An endowment campaign, highly ambitious in scope, has recently been brought to a triumphant close. It was not for more buildings — who could want more? — but for funds to strengthen the instruction and administration of the university. The new Yale has grown naturally out of the Old Yale in that it is seeking to confront the New America.

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

II

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

A PRESIDENT of Amherst College, Dr. Edward Hitchcock, who knew Mary Lyon well and prepared the first extended account of her life, tells in his Memoir the significant story of a dream. He had been lecturing not long before at Mount Holyoke, and had seen a fire extinguished, under Miss Lyon's quiet direction, in the first Seminary building, which was in fact eventually devoured by that element. The dream was to the effect that on an anniversary day, when the students were undergoing an examination before a large audience, violent flames burst out in this very building. Yet everything went forward without interruption. "As I passed along," the dreamer tells us, "a window opened, and Miss Lyon appeared with a letter in her hand, which she committed to someone to take to the post office. I thought it a strange time to be writing letters, but was told that it was a circular which Miss Lyon was getting out to obtain means for erecting

CLASSIC SHADES

a new building!" No vision could have been more characteristic of the founder and first head of what is now Mount Holyoke College. In the vigor it suggests it accords completely with one of the many injunctions she imparted to her pupils — "Learn to sit with energy."

It was in keeping with another strongly marked characteristic of Mary Lyon — her piety, her strictly Biblical attitude towards the world — that more than thirty years after she died an admirer could allude quite naturally to her life as "an added verse to Hebrews xi." Evidently he felt sure that all her fellow admirers would identify the chapter at once by its first verse, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," and by its long enumeration of the scriptural personages who "by faith" wrought wonderful things. In the same confidence that the Bible was uppermost in the mind of a correspondent, Mary Lyon herself could toss off casually in her letters such expressions as "May I remember you as Paul did the Romans (Romans i. 4)," — namely, in his prayers, — and allude as familiarly to Hebrews xiii. 16, and Ephesians iii. 10,

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

as not everybody to-day could refer to the Ten Commandments by their precise numbers.

The state of mind implied in all this calls for mention at the very beginning of an account of Mary Lyon and Mount Holyoke, for the reason that her later biographers seem to have touched too lightly upon it. Not so the earlier writers about her; their pages fairly reek with piety. In reading them to-day it is necessary to remind ourselves that modes of thought and utterance which fall upon modern ears with a sense of unreality, even of a certain mawkish weakness, were entirely consistent with qualities that command the frankest admiration, and are still declaring themselves, though in less frankly fervid and self-revealing terms. Let us, then, not forget that some of the religion — now looking more like religiosity — of the first half of the nineteenth century has a twentieth-century equivalent, and that a modern college, like Mount Holyoke to-day, is the natural growth and fruitage of just such planting as that of Mary Lyon. And let us remember that a century ago it was possible to be at the same time an earnestly evangelical Christian, more

CLASSIC SHADES

“fundamentalist” than all but a few still living, and yet of a spirit essentially so modern as to fall under contemporary suspicion as a dangerously innovating radical. Such a person was the founder of Mount Holyoke.

I

Mount Holyoke and Yale have this in common, that each institution made its beginnings under a modest name — Yale as a “Collegiate School,” Mount Holyoke as a “Female Seminary.” Another insubstantial link between the two colleges may be welded out of President Dwight’s early advocacy of more advanced education for women, in support of which a pungent remark of his has already been quoted. Mary Lyon embodied extraordinarily in her own person the truth of this remark, in that her innate qualities opened not only the doors which she entered to such good purpose but those through which a multitude of American women are still passing. It is as a veritable pioneer that she, with the college of her forward-reaching thought, is to be regarded in this place.

Mary Lyon was born of old New England

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

stock on a small farm at Buckland, near Ashfield, in northwestern Massachusetts, February 28, 1797. She was forty years old when Mount Holyoke Female Seminary received its first pupils in November 1837. An intelligent and ambitious girl born in corresponding circumstances in 1897, and now more than thirty years of age, has had "a chance" so vastly different from Mary Lyon's that a mere recital of the facts of her early life will suggest, through its contrasts, the need for all that she accomplished. Bearing in mind what might perfectly well have happened to the 1897 child with a background as much like Mary Lyon's as its modern counterpart can be, let us follow that 1797 girl quickly through the years that made her what she became.

She was the sixth of her parents' eight children, six girls and two boys, one of whom died before she was born. When she was five her father died, a hard-working farmer, whose legacy to his widow and children consisted chiefly of more hard work. He left, besides, the name of a good friend and generous neighbor. In later years Mary Lyon recalled the words of a poor

CLASSIC SHADES

woman her mother had been helping: "How is it that the widow can do more for me than anyone else?" Here were the seeds of a good tradition for the Lyon children to carry on.

One of the most frequently quoted anecdotes about Mary Lyon has to do with her earliest years. She was found one day in the kitchen of the Buckland farmhouse, not working at the task her mother had set for her, but standing on a chair, studying the hourglass. When asked what she was doing, she replied that she believed she had thought of a way by which she could make more time. From that moment until her death, time was always something of which she needed more. Her industry both at home and at school appears to have been incessant. She took her part in the various family labors, learning early to spin and weave, and to make her own clothing. Such district schooling as the neighborhood afforded she seized upon with eagerness. It was not until she was twenty, in 1817, that her remarkably active mind found the outlet it naturally craved. In that year she entered the newly opened Sanderson Academy, at Ashfield, an uncouth country girl, wearing a

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

blue homespun dress with running strings at neck and waist — *à la* meal bag, one may surmise — and creating in general the impression implied in her designation as “that Mary Lyon.”

If her exterior was startling, the powers of her mind proved even more so. Her speed in the acquisition of knowledge complicated the orderly processes of teaching, and one Friday afternoon the principal of the academy, thinking to hobble her for at least a little while, handed her, for the first time, a Latin grammar, and set a stiff lesson to be mastered by Monday. On Monday she brought amazement to principal and pupils by reciting the entire book with scarcely a mistake. She had to confess to the enormity — for the time and place — of studying all day Sunday. It was lucky that Mary Lyon was not suspected of some sort of black magic — as she well might have been if the principal of the academy had not happened to be Elijah H. Burritt, author of *The Geography of the Heavens* and brother of Elihu Burritt, the “Learned Blacksmith,” whose mental acrobatics must have prepared a kinsman for anything.

At Ashfield, moreover, Mary Lyon was fortunate

CLASSIC SHADES

in the friendship of Amanda White, whose father, "Squire" White, was a trustee of the academy. Not only did he make it possible for her to remain there after her scanty funds were exhausted, but by taking her into his household provided her with opportunities for education in the amenities of living which hitherto had been lamentably lacking. From the well-ordered ways of the Whites she learned at least the rudiments of attention to her personal appearance, though this seems never to have given her much concern. Even to admiring pupils at Mount Holyoke, when she was not far from fifty, she conveyed an impression of awkwardness — "strongly built," wrote one of them, "and evidently a foe to corsets." In the eyes of another appeared "an unusually broad chest, not much distinction of waistline, hips and abdomen less prominent than shoulders and chest, and arms set back so that elbows were prominent in walking." Not an alluring picture, yet the wavy auburn hair of middle age, — probably red in earlier days, — the large expressive blue eyes, the natural cheerfulness and vivacity, help to account for that power of personality which



MARY LYON

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

seems to have marked her throughout life as an unquestionable "somebody."

"Squire" White obviously so regarded her, for when the time came to send his daughter Amanda to the Byfield Seminary of the Reverend Joseph Emerson — of the same ilk with Ralph Waldo — he enabled Mary Lyon to accompany her. This was a determining step in her life, for under the instruction of a master so intelligent and imaginative as Emerson her own mental and spiritual processes were quickened and extended as never before. She delighted especially in his attitude toward women. "His regard for females," as she put it in a letter written after his death, "was unusually high. . . . In mixed company, I never knew him converse in a profitable and interesting manner, and on some practical subject, with a circle of gentlemen, on one hand; and when turning his attention to a circle of ladies, on the other, descend to needless commonplace inquiries, and trifling remarks." In those days of "ladies" and "females," "women" and "girls" were almost indelicate terms; and in one of the injunctions of Mary Lyon to her pupils at Mount

CLASSIC SHADES

Holyoke her mind must have been turning back to the Reverend Joseph Emerson, when, in all innocence of the implications her words might hold one day, she said: "Choose the society of such gentlemen as will converse without even once seeming to think that you are a lady."

Besides fortifying her valuation of "females," Emerson filled Mary Lyon with a real zeal for knowledge, together with the conviction that "education was to fit one to do good." During her months at Byfield she allied herself openly with the professedly Christian pupils of the seminary, even at the costly sacrifice of her habits of Sunday study. Beyond all this, she formed a vital friendship with Zilpah Grant, afterwards Mrs. Banister, a young teacher at Byfield, with whose interests and fortunes her own were to become closely intertwined.

Through the years of teaching which followed her period of study at Byfield, it would be idle to follow her step by step. At Ashfield, in her native Buckland, and in collaboration with Miss Grant in the seminaries she conducted at Derry, New Hampshire, and Ipswich, Massachusetts, Mary Lyon proved herself a teacher

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

of remarkable capacity to impart both the knowledge to be derived from books and the principles of the religion which more and more controlled her thought and life. In her work near home she "boarded round," and was paid from seventy-five cents to a dollar a week for her teaching. She seized any spare weeks she could command for the study of chemistry under the scientists who taught the young men at Amherst and Troy. Bringing back to her own pupils the fruits of such excursions, she must have practised that priceless bit of technique in the teacher's art which she enjoined upon others in later years at Mount Holyoke — "Make their eyes sparkle once a day."

While Mary Lyon was teaching at the Ipswich Female Seminary, where in the absence of Miss Grant she acted at times as principal, the vision which became Mount Holyoke took form in her imagination. She had only to contemplate her own wanderings in the wilderness of women's education to see that most young women could not possibly expect to get far. Even at the "Oberlin Collegiate Institute," afterwards Oberlin College, which was opened in 1833 as a

CLASSIC SHADES

pioneer coeducational enterprise, the "females" were obliged to content themselves at first with opportunities comparatively limited. Institutions calling themselves "colleges" for women were springing up in the South, but the name was too big for them, perhaps even more than it would have been for some of the best "female seminaries" at the North. One of the best of these, the Moravian Female Seminary, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, had achieved a high reputation as a fashionable school for girls, who came to it from places as remote as Boston. There were famous teachers, such as Miss Catherine Beecher, at Hartford and Cincinnati, Miss Catharine Sedgwick at Stockbridge, and Mrs. Emma Willard finally at Troy. But for the most part the schools they conducted were resorts of the well-to-do and the rich; and they were open to the objections to which, in smaller degree, the academies to be found in such New England towns as Ashfield were also subject — that their value at any given time was largely dependent upon a single personality, and that they lacked the funds to ensure any long continuance.

In this matter of permanence the contrast be-

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

tween such a masculine institution of New England as Harvard or Yale and any existing school, academy, or seminary open to young women became a growing distress to Mary Lyon. Her chief concern, moreover, was for the less prosperous. "My thoughts, feelings, and judgment," she wrote to her friend Zilpah Grant, "are turned toward the middle classes of society." She felt with all the fervor of her nature that the country needed an increased supply of properly trained women school-teachers, and as her evangelistic religious faith grew in its intensity the fields of missionary service waved before her like ripening wheat. Realizing fully how great was the need for superior women in the schools and households of her native land, she could yet declare, "A lady should be so educated that she can go as a missionary at a fortnight's notice." Teachers, missionaries, "those who are in the middle walks of life" — such were the classes of human beings to whose achievement of their highest possibilities Mary Lyon elected to devote the remainder of her own life, after deciding when past thirty to place definitely behind her all thoughts of marrying.

CLASSIC SHADES

In 1834 Mary Lyon severed her connection with the Ipswich Female Seminary. Before taking that decisive step she had not only seen the vision of her permanent, inexpensive institution of advanced learning for girls, but had actually made a start towards getting the requisite funds for it. From the women of Ipswich and its neighborhood — not an affluent region — she secured \$1000 for the preliminary expenses. Her first idea — and Miss Grant's — was to continue their work, with increased resources, at Ipswich. This plan met with no satisfactory response, nor was it practicable to seize an opportunity to utilize the vacated buildings of a school at Amherst. In Amherst, however, there was much to stimulate her. There lived the Reverend Edward Hitchcock, the eminent scholar who had directed her scientific studies, and was to become the President of Amherst College and her own first biographer. There, too, was the example of Amherst College itself, recently emerged from its earlier estate as an Academy on the very score that its moderate charges would make it accessible to all; and it gave Mary Lyon courage to reflect, and declare,

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

that "the funds for Amherst College have been collected, not from the rich, but from liberal Christians in common life."

Mary Lyon was a prolific coiner of phrases that stick in the mind. Among the best of them is this: "It is one of the nicest of mental operations to distinguish between what is very difficult and what is utterly impossible." Was it impossible for her — quite unknown among the possessors of wealth and influence, not at all desirous to enter their circle, bringing forward a new, possibly a revolutionary, idea, bearing the whole burden of proof in favor of what Thomas Fuller two centuries before her had called the "conveniency of she-colleges"¹ — to launch her enterprise, or was it merely difficult? She put it into the second category, and took up her labors of begging from the pious and moderately well-to-do the funds she wanted for the benefit of young women to whose families the same definitions could be applied. Perhaps it was fortunate that "on the whole" was another favorite phrase of hers. In the fifteen years of life

¹ I filch the quotation from Miss Beth B. Gilchrist's *Life of Mary Lyon*, the source of much of the information assembled here.

CLASSIC SHADES

remaining to her after 1834 she had frequent opportunity to employ it, frequent occasion to marshal her common-sense philosophy in adjusting the scales that weighed her encouragements against her seeming defeats.

On the whole it seemed imperative to associate a few men with her undertaking. This was the more difficult when it is recalled that the men whose interest she enlisted debated seriously one night in Boston whether Mary Lyon and two women helping in the enterprise could be admitted to their deliberations. One of the most active trustees and money raisers, the Reverend Roswell Hawks, becoming in due course president of the Mount Holyoke trustees, attempted to assert his authority one day by announcing, "I am the head of this institution"; to which Mary Lyon flashed back, "Then I am the neck." On the whole her good sense saved her again and again from mistakes — as when the name "Pangynaskean Seminary," suggested by a classicist who prided himself on a word that would promise to the initiated the all-round cultivation of feminine powers, was vetoed; and when the mountain that gave char-

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

acter to the site she selected for her Seminary was chosen as its name-giver. "You must not call this Miss Lyon's school," she said in later years. "I regard it so much a child of Providence, that I do not like to have my name made prominent." Yet how could it have been otherwise?

The men and women incited by Mary Lyon to join their efforts with hers in raising the funds her project demanded did what they could, but it was her individual work that brought the Seminary into existence — and that in the small space of three years. One of her account books "records," says Miss Gilchrist, "about twenty-seven thousand dollars subscribed by a few more than eighteen hundred people in ninety-one towns. The largest single sums entered here are two of a thousand dollars each; the smallest three of six cents." The poor were more often responsive than the rich. On one occasion, returning from an unfruitful call upon a family of large wealth, she summed it up by saying, "They live in a costly house, it is full of costly things, they wear costly clothes — but oh, they're *little bits of folks!*" The energy which

CLASSIC SHADES

she put into all her begging is suggested by a passage in Dr. Hitchcock's biography:—

She went hither and thither by public conveyances, with Mr. Hawks, or any other friend of the enterprise. Traveling the road from Boston to the Connecticut often, she could scarce ride any ten miles of the route without being recognized by some fellow-traveller, whose cordial salutation would introduce her to the company. All felt very well acquainted with her, as soon as they heard her name, and she would soon be invited to detail the progress of her enterprise. Being infallibly certain that the object would commend itself to the good common sense and best impulses of true New Englanders, she improved every opportunity of unfolding its merits to any who seemed capable of comprehending them, whether acquaintances or strangers. She could make herself heard easily, although the road might be a little uneven, and would expatiate on the subject as freely as in her own parlor. She did not talk louder than many fashionably-dressed boarding-school girls do in public conveyances, the difference being that the latter inform the company of their own personal affairs, while she discussed principles as enduring as the human race, and as vital to human welfare as they are enduring.

On November 8, 1837, only three years from the time Mary Lyon began to work for the realization of her dream, a substantial brick building of four stories and a basement was ready for the occupancy of the eighty girls who first entered Mount Holyoke Female Seminary.

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

The physical preparations for this day had proved as difficult as the financial. One morning when the walls of the building were first in process of erection, they collapsed. The artisan in charge of the work would hardly have been surprised to see Mary Lyon burst into tears. Instead, she anticipated Pollyanna in her rejoicings that all the workmen had escaped unhurt. Already she had gone far in acquiring the self-mastery that was lacking in earlier days, for on one of these, when a hostess told her that supper would soon be ready, she stifled her disappointment at the loss of a half-hour on which she had been counting for "a good cry." The more schooled emotions expressed themselves, when the corner stone of the first building was laid, in a letter to Zilpah Grant: "The stones and brick and mortar speak a language which vibrates through my very soul. How much thought and how much feeling have I had on this general subject in years that are past. And I have indeed lived to see the time when a body of gentlemen have ventured to lay the corner-stone of an edifice which will cost about fifteen thousand dollars — and for an institution for

CLASSIC SHADES

females. Surely the Lord hath remembered our low estate." On the day of the actual opening the excitements were more immediate.

At this time she was wont to say that her head seemed full of bread, tin dippers, and clothespins. Her hands were certainly full enough. So were those of the trustees and their wives, busy, according to their several talents, in tacking down mattings, washing dishes, setting up beds, and moving furniture. The newly arriving pupils could have had no more impressive demonstration of one of the underlying principles of the early Mount Holyoke — that both for the sake of the institution, through lowering its cost of maintenance, and for the sake of the girls, through benefiting their health of body and spirit, they should bear their part in the domestic work of the large family they were joining. Mary Lyon herself, with the Buckland farm behind her, could set an example of efficiency and enjoyment in the performance of household tasks, however menial, which must have served as a potent stimulus to her pupils.

In addition to all the physical preparations for the opening of Mount Holyoke, there were

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

the large questions of educational policy, the scope and methods of study, everything, indeed, that was implied in that imposing but happily discarded word, "Pangynaskean." To these problems it is clear, from the circulars in which Mary Lyon was setting forth the ideals of her Seminary, and from the record of her spoken words, that she was giving a great deal of intelligent and sympathetic thought. She was as truly a pioneer as any invader upon a new field of activity. Twelve years were left to her to practise, before her death in 1849, the theories which in the forty years of her life before Mount Holyoke was opened she had been building out of her thought and experience. From this time forward her life and that of the Seminary were virtually identical. Yet each was destined to produce effects far transcending local boundaries. She spoke truly when she wrote, at the time when the Mount Holyoke corner stone was laid, "This will be an era in female education. The work will not stop with this institution. This enterprise may have to struggle through embarrassments for years, but its influence will be felt."

CLASSIC SHADES

II

It was written long ago of Mary Lyon's teaching that "perhaps the two subjects in which she most excelled were chemistry and Butler's Analogy, subjects usually thought to demand talents of quite a different order." Chemistry has survived as a subject of school and college instruction, but where and by whom is Bishop Joseph Butler's classic work, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Course and Constitution of Nature*, still taught as a textbook of living thought? To succeed equally in these two fields was to demonstrate the equal value in the teacher's mind of science and a fundamentally religious philosophy of life. In the second field, especially, Mary Lyon would have said that she was working for the fulfillment of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer. The establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth presented itself to her in terms of foreign missions, revivals, conversions, rigid Sabbath-keeping, and all manner of strict observances still maintained in the Calvinistic New England of her day.

An exact reincarnation of Mary Lyon in this

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

day of ours would afford, in many particulars, a futile anachronism. But if anything whatever is to be learned from contemplating such a life as hers, and relating it to an institution into which she poured her spirit to enduring purpose, it is that such a spirit can go on expressing itself with little or no change in its essence, albeit in utterly new and different terms. I return to a point suggested at the very beginning of this paper because my memory goes back to a time when younger contemporaries of Mary Lyon, men and women whose religious faith and practices were coeval with hers, could still be encountered, and because one would feel a certain disloyalty to them through any failure to remind our later generation that these persons of an elder day deserved respect, and that of a sort which is disappearing from the earth. With such a disappearance it would be a calamity to lose also a true valuation of the essential thing in a religion like Mary Lyon's — that its underlying purpose was a realization of "Thy kingdom come . . . on earth." If the word "kingdom" undergoes widely differing definitions in different generations and centuries, it is important to

CLASSIC SHADES

remember that those who are working for the thing itself have the same essential end in view.

Let this not be forgotten when the exceedingly evangelistic character of the early Mount Holyoke is recalled. The emphasis on prayer and Bible study, the frequent recurrence of revivals in which distracted girls were confronted with the necessity of deciding whether or not they "belonged to Christ," the intensely personal note that vibrated through it all — such things came straight from the quality and influence of Mary Lyon herself. Her deep convictions, her powerful personality, swept all before her. No, not quite all, and in one conflict between another positive individuality and her own a genuine pleasure may be taken. In the autumn of 1847 Emily Dickinson came from her home in Amherst to the Seminary at South Hadley. She spent a happy Thanksgiving with her family. On the day before Christmas Miss Lyon announced to her pupils that that festival would be kept as a fast, and asked all those who approved the plan of devoting the day to long hours of meditation in their rooms to signify their feeling by rising. With the exception of Emily Dickin-

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

son and her roommate the entire company rose. Aghast at this rebellion of spirit, Miss Lyon addressed the girls, again seated, and called upon any who were still unwilling to spend Christmas as she had suggested to stand that all the school might see them. Emily Dickinson's roommate remaining glued to her chair, Emily stood alone. That afternoon she took the stage to Amherst, having provided Mount Holyoke with as good a Christmas story as is ever likely to be told there.

This is quite of a piece with Miss Lyon's disapproval of letter-writing — even to one's family — on Sunday. At Oberlin, slightly antedating Mount Holyoke, it was even announced to incoming students that “none can be received who travel on the Sabbath on their way to Oberlin.” The proprieties of the 1830's were portentous. Among them, at Mount Holyoke, was the convention that “grace before meat” must not be spoken by a woman if a man were at the table. Male visitors were accordingly warned before entering the dining room that they would be expected to ask the blessing. If they demurred, they were left outside until Mary Lyon had asked it. Once, it appears, a Yale student

CLASSIC SHADES

visiting his Mount Holyoke sister got by the portal uninformed, and, suddenly charged with the responsibility of invoking a benediction upon the outspread viands, made a horrible, blushing mess of his opportunity. Once, again, when heads were bowed, a male visitor balked, no grace was said, and Miss Lyon broke all precedents by proceeding to carve in a standing position.

Reconcile such incidents as you will with a biographer's confident statement that the great features of a subject were those which the mind of Mary Lyon always seized upon first. "The girl who asked Miss Lyon for an excuse from calisthenics class," says Miss Gilchrist, "so that she might have more time to read her Bible received answer that it was just as much a religious duty to learn her lessons and take exercise as it was to read her Bible or to pray." An hour's walk in the open air every day for every acclimated girl at Mount Holyoke was a cardinal rule of the place; and the principle — not abandoned until long after Miss Lyon's death — that the girls themselves should do the housework of every kind was perhaps of even greater importance in her eyes. Both she and her charges

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

disliked the implication from this rule that Mount Holyoke was a manual-labor, charity school. The wonder to-day is that the young women accepted so meekly the exactions of this system.

A letter from a student in the early days contains, for example, the following passage: "I rise at half-past three in the morning, for my chum and myself make the early fires, eleven in the domestic hall, and two in the dining hall. We chose this work because we like to have our work all done so early, and we have *so much* more time to study." Another pupil wrote, in 1848, "Wednesday (to-day) is recreation day, but some of the young ladies call it workation day, there is so much to be done." It was indeed a euphemism to apply the name of "recreation" to the day of the week when washing, cleaning floors, and all sorts of hard domestic work had to be caught up with. Better things were to be expected of Thanksgiving Day, and thus the second letter-writer records them: "We all had the privilege of sleeping as long as we wished to in the morning, provided we were ready for breakfast at 8 o'clock. I rose at five,

CLASSIC SHADES

an hour later than usual, and worked two hours and a half before breakfast, helping Mrs. Hawks [the President's wife] make mince pies, and you may be sure I had a good appetite for the nice broiled chicken we had."

It was indeed not only teachers and missionaries, but stay-at-home wives and mothers in households of moderate resources, that Mary Lyon was bent upon training. Her methods — if one may believe the happy and useful body of graduates of whom the earliest were her own pupils — had the great virtue of *working*. She believed in them so completely herself that her labors for Mount Holyoke were their own reward. She would never accept a salary of more than two hundred dollars a year herself, and found devoted associates to work with her on corresponding terms. It did not take her long to introduce Latin and French as subjects of instruction that marked a step towards converting the seminary into the college to which she was definitely looking forward, though not as an accomplished fact in her own lifetime. It was nearly forty years after her death that Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, having passed

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

through the authorized designation of "Seminary and College," emerged in 1888 with a Massachusetts charter as Mount Holyoke College. This was what Mary Lyon really founded.

The vivid hue of her personality has already been suggested through words of her pupils about her. Another description by one of them gives a miniature picture that after nearly eighty years displays her unmistakably as she went about her work at South Hadley: "Rather under the medium height, with a strong, muscular frame, a florid complexion, with blazing, light-blue Saxon eyes, kindly, severe, or pathetic, as occasion warranted, but with now and then a sparkle of irrepressible merriment; hair of palest auburn, the sunny waves just sparsely threaded with gray, and so riotous in habit as to be never quite as smooth as fashion decreed, strands of it waving and jiggling about her temples in an entirely unwished-for manner. She always wore a demure little lace cap, strings flying as she hurried about, with a generous coil of her beautiful hair gleaming through its thin meshes behind."

There is energy in every line of this little

CLASSIC SHADES

picture, and energy — with which, it will be remembered, she urged her pupils even to sit — was the very medium that translated her advanced ideas about the education of women into the facts of Mount Holyoke. It is not for many persons of Mary Lyon's unresting activity of mind and body to attain old age; nor was she an exception to this rule.

On March 5, 1849, less than a week after her fifty-second birthday, she died in the Seminary building of which the earliest stones, bricks, and mortar had so stirred her soul. A pupil had died of malignant erysipelas a few days before, and the disease in milder form assailed Mary Lyon, already weakened by a severe cold. Then came the "distressing intelligence" — as a contemporary report from Mount Holyoke put it — "of the death of a nephew by suicide while deranged, and without leaving evidence that he was a Christian." The shock of this news, deeply felt, aggravated her malady. Her own mind, before the end, became unsettled, but there was peace at the last, and earlier in this final illness she spoke the words one still may read upon the simple monument in her memory

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

that stands in the Mount Holyoke College grounds: "There is nothing in the universe that I fear, but that I shall not know all my duty or shall fail to do it."

III

In the course of a conversation about Mary Lyon, Miss Mary E. Woolley, the present head of Mount Holyoke College, said not long ago that, having begun by thinking of Mary Lyon as good, she now thinks of her as great. The quality of greatness is hard to define. The production of something that possesses permanent value can hardly be counted among its indispensable elements, but may certainly be taken as one of its proofs.

To a degree quite uncommon in the history of institutions and their founders, Mount Holyoke College may be regarded as a "lengthened shadow" of Mary Lyon. It lacks her name, but her spirit and personality have been stamped upon it as no designation of a college by a founder's name has succeeded in doing for that name. All honor to the name of Vassar and Smith and of all other benefactors whose fortunes

CLASSIC SHADES

have conferred a species of immortality on one patronymic after another! Yet through giving herself rather than money, — which she could not give, — Mary Lyon may have done more than them all.

Her effort, though bearing neither her own name nor at first that of a college, was clearly the path-finding, trail-making effort from which the American women's colleges of to-day have sprung. Elmira College came first, within ten years of Mary Lyon's death; then Vassar, opened in 1865; then Smith and Wellesley, in the seventies — all directly or indirectly indebted to Mount Holyoke for its pioneering example. The trail has broadened to an established highway, along which that thing unheard-of before Mary Lyon created it, a permanently endowed institution of advanced study for women, accessible to students of slender means, rears its head so frequently that it is hardly more noticeable than a motor car in this day of the vanished horse.

And Mount Holyoke College itself? Into what has it grown through the ninety years since the Seminary doors were first opened? Imagine

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

Mary Lyon returning and asking what has become of this thought of hers: "If the Bible only takes the lead in our schools, I care not how closely the sciences follow." Well, Mount Holyoke is no longer the mother of missionaries such as those over whom Mary Lyon yearned and prayed. But the Bible holds its place as a subject of reverent and intelligent modern study. The missionaries go forth into all manner of new fields — business, science, and the social contacts of a world not even yet regenerated. With the teachers and the future wives and mothers, — for the statistics of Mount Holyoke show that well over half of its graduates take unto themselves husbands, — Mary Lyon would find, at least in the fundamentals of employment, less that required explanation. Her eyes would open wide with delight at the new science building, equipped with laboratories that would have seemed not many years ago beyond the roseate dreams of the best colleges for men. She would rejoice in it most of all as a token that in a changing world Mount Holyoke has gone steadily forward in that devotion to science which shared her own allegiance to the cause of religion.

CLASSIC SHADES

It would please her to learn that the College has not attracted either the very rich or the very poor, especially of racial stock newly grafted on the American tree. The students come from many states and countries, but the towns and smaller cities of New England and New York are largely represented in the number, and the daughters of ministers, physicians, and lawyers make up about a third of the total enrollment. The flavor of the place has accordingly a tang that is distinctively American — not so much of the new, highly urban sort as of that older bone-and-sinew type in the social order of which Mary Lyon herself was an early-nineteenth-century representative.

These are of course generalities, from which, in a college of about a thousand students, with a graduate roll of mounting thousands, a generous allowance of exceptions must doubtless be made. But a history like that of Mount Holyoke, with the long-enduring personal influence of a Mary Lyon, must lead one to expect a fairly definite product even in these indefinite days. "On the whole," as Mary Lyon would have said, the expectation is fulfilled. Yet again imagine her

MARY LYON AND MOUNT HOLYOKE

back at Mount Holyoke to-day. I wonder if she would not greet with a special chuckle of pleasure the reported saying of a student in another college for young women: "I don't care for those South Hadley girls — they 're so darned feminine!"

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

III

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

IT may not seem so strange to readers of this chapter as to the writer of it to begin with a justification of the inclusion of Mark Hopkins and Williams College in the book of which it forms a part. This would never have been considered but for a provocative circumstance. The chapter, uncompleted, was the subject of a conversation one day. On the next the participant in it who had done most of the listening made a confession. "Do you know," he said, "that before you told me something about Mark Hopkins, I had never heard of him?"

This confession came not from an ignoramus nor from a stripling, but from a mature and highly intelligent writer and editor, well versed in American affairs, and in the history and literature of his own and other lands. It may be added that he displayed his acquaintance with Williams College by relating a college joke of

CLASSIC SHADES

his day about a football game between Williams and Colgate, with cheers compounded of the advertising slogans of two brands of shaving soap.

If there are others to whom the words Hopkins and Williams mean so little, it is high time to lighten their darkness.

The significance of the college with which the name of Mark Hopkins is identified may be illustrated by a story which was more familiar when the classics were known to all than it is to-day. Herodotus tells it, about Themistocles and the Battle of Salamis. After the victory the Greeks undertook to vote a prize of valor to him who had proved himself most worthy in bringing their triumph to pass. The commanders were to vote, each recording his first and second choice. When the ballots were counted, every man received his own vote for first place; "but for the second place the greater number of votes came out in agreement, assigning that to Themistocles. They then were left alone in their votes, while Themistocles in regard to the second place surpassed the rest by far."

Now Williams holds firmly its place of primacy

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

in the affections of its sons. With others it is a sort of Themistocles among our colleges. One of the commonest sayings among American fathers is this: "If I were not going to send my son to my own college, I should certainly have him go to Williams." Here, quite obviously, is one good reason for knowing more about it.

Others are to be found in the extraordinary beauty of its mountain setting, and, with all respect to the friend who had never heard of Mark Hopkins, in the fame which the conjury of his very name through a generous half of the nineteenth century brought to his college. More than sixty years ago this double magnet of place and person drew an eminent visitor to Williamstown. This was the Reverend Dr. James McCosh, a professor in Queen's College, Belfast, not yet president of Princeton, but merely a traveler in these United States. He had heard of the beauties of Williamstown and determined to see them for himself. Thus he wrote a few years later: —

"I was certainly not disappointed in the situation of the town. It is placed on a knoll in the heart of a capacious hollow, surrounded with

CLASSIC SHADES

imposing mountains. It struck me as a spot at which the Last Judgment might be held, with the universe assembled on the slopes of the encircling hills."

But this was not all. In his own country, James McCosh had read the writings of Mark Hopkins, and him also he wished to see. "If I was not disappointed with the scenery," he wrote, "I was still less so with Dr. Hopkins, whom I found a man stalwart and elevated like the mountains among which he lives and muses, and yet adorned withal with graces as lovely as the foliage of the spruce hemlock which there clothes the scenery. Since that time I ever place him before me in imagination, seated under a tree in the heart of the mountains pondering some deep theme, seeking light for himself, and wishing to impart it to others."

It is worth observing that Mark Hopkins, remembered as a boy for his manner of sitting — possibly anticipating Mary Lyon's injunction, "sit with energy," — was recalled both by Dr. McCosh and by his own most eminent pupil, James A. Garfield, President of the United States, in the sitting posture. No other words

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

spoken by Garfield, and nothing else about the President of Williams College while Garfield was a student there, have become so familiar to the ears of Americans — especially those concerned with matters of education — as the much-quoted definition of a university as “a student at one end of a log and Mark Hopkins at the other.”

The actual words uttered by Garfield at a New York dinner of Williams graduates in 1871 have been reported differently by persons who heard them. A pine bench, a log hut, and a brick shanty enter into the variants. But the log and the boy provide the image which has planted itself in the popular mind, and all the variants of the famous saying point in one direction. They testify to the belief expressed by Garfield, and shared by graduates of Williams in classes covering more than half a century, that Mark Hopkins became the classic figure as which he stands forth in the field of American education simply through the direct personal instruction of his pupils. He was perforce an academic administrator, and professionally a philosopher, but it was not in either of these capacities that he made an enduring mark. He

CLASSIC SHADES

was preëminently a teacher, and a great teacher. Quite possibly he could have taught any one of several other subjects as successfully as he taught the "moral philosophy" of his day. His pupils stood ready to applaud the words of Emerson, "It matters little what you learn, the question is with whom you learn," and to point to Mark Hopkins as the triumphant exemplar of them. His identification with Williams College is complete, and in its history and characteristics the smaller New England college which neither could nor would assume the qualities of an urban university is clearly typified.

I

At the end of the nineteenth century Williams College had been in existence one hundred and seven years, through nearly sixty of which Mark Hopkins was a member of its teaching staff, occupying, besides, the post of president for thirty-six of those years. When he became Professor of Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric in 1830, after a brief experience as tutor following his graduation from the College in 1824, Williams was still a small and poor institution. Even at

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

the time of his resignation from the presidency in 1872, the beautifully equipped Williams College of the present day lay so hidden in the future that the similes of log and pine bench and hut and shanty must have seemed far less remote than they appear in the modern Williamstown. The beginnings of the College and many of its early years were indeed humble in comparison with anything — excepting the superb mountain setting — that now strikes the eye. With this very humbleness elements of romance were joined.

It was a romantic figure to whom the College owed its foundation and its name. Captain Ephraim Williams, of sturdy New England stock, was a traveled bachelor turned colonial soldier, stationed, as such, at the frontier post of Fort Massachusetts, near the present Williamstown. This post was one of a series of military stations erected for defense against the hostile French and Indians, and Williams was there long enough to form an attachment to the place and a vision for its future. In 1755, commissioned colonel, he was ordered to take part in an expedition for the capture of Crown Point, a

CLASSIC SHADES

French military post on Lake George, near which he met his death September 8, 1755, in an ambuscade of Indians and French. He was a brave, skillful soldier, and something more. His military outfit for the expedition which proved his last contained eleven books. Besides the New Testament and the Psalms of David, there were military, political, and historical works not to be expected in the camp kit of a forty-year-old New England fighter. Nor was the will which he made at Albany on the way to his death what might have been anticipated, for it contained a provision for the appropriation of his residuary estate "towards the support and maintenance of a free school (in a township west of Fort Massachusetts, commonly called the West Township) forever, provided the said township fall within the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Bay, and provided also that the Governor and General Court give the said township the name of Williamstown."

His thrifty executors nursed the fund for thirty years, till it reached the sum of \$9157, when the Free School was incorporated. A lottery authorized by the General Court, and

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

advertised in a Boston newspaper as an attractive opportunity to gratify humane wishes, — “especially as great pecuniary profit *may* attend the gratification,” — brought in enough more to justify a start. The first building — still standing, reconstructed, as West College — was opened, with the School itself, in 1791. Two years later the Free School was converted by an Act of the General Court into Williams College, under a charter still in force.

The influences of the infant college, with its first president, Fitch, and a majority of its trustees, graduates of Yale, were extremely orthodox. It must be said, however, that among the students the same spirit of infidelity which Timothy Dwight was fighting at Yale as a baleful product of the French Revolution displayed itself, to the dismay of “the older generation,” and open professors of religion were pitifully few. A member of the first freshman class wrote in his old age of the undergraduate life he had known: “Respecting the morals of the College, some infidels were moral men according to the common acceptation of that term; but, as a general rule, the College suffered about as much

CLASSIC SHADES

in morals as it did in the theory of religion. Comparatively with colleges now in New England, I think we were quite immoral."

Over against this state of affairs in the early days, the circumstances of one of the most distinctive and valued traditions must be placed. This is the tradition of "the Haystack" and the origin of the movement which led to the establishment of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In the summer of 1806 a small company of students, led by one Samuel J. Mills, met for a prayer meeting in a grove not far from the college. When a violent thunderstorm came up, they took refuge under a haystack near by. Here they pledged themselves to the conversion of heathen lands to the Christian religion, and united in singing this singularly naïve stanza of a hymn:—

Let all the heathen writers join,
To form one perfect book;
Great God, if once compared with Thine,
How mean their writings look!

The same simplicity of mind appears in the declaration of Mills, "I wish we could break out upon the heathen like the Irish Rebellion, forty

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

thousand strong." For all this lack of sophistication, Mills carried with him to Andover the seeds of a secret missionary fraternity, "The Brethren," and bore a part in presenting a memorial to the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts, which led to the formation of the American Board and the sending forth of its first missionaries in 1812.

The pride of Williams College in all this suffers some tempering at the hands of Professor Arthur Latham Perry in his outspoken volume, *Williamstown and Williams College*. There it appears that the religiously disposed young men of 1806 had to assemble in secret places in order to escape from the taunts of the more numerous scoffers, and that Mills, instead of receiving his missionary inspiration at Williams, entered the college a grown man, already "converted" and committed to the cause of missions. Be that as it may, the haystack is a significant symbol in Williams history, for, as the nineteenth century proceeded and a series of "revivals" affected deeply — just as at Yale — the religious life of the college, a notable succession of Christian ministers and missionaries, influenced especially

CLASSIC SHADES

by the teachings of Mark Hopkins and his brother Albert, went out from Williams into all parts of the world.

But before the accession of Mark Hopkins to the presidency, the College had passed through precarious days, more than once narrowly escaping distinction. The first president, Fitch, resigned in 1815. The number of students had shrunk from a maximum of one hundred and fifteen, under his administration, to a total enrollment of fifty-eight in the first year under his successor. In applying for a college charter, the Trustees of the Williams Donation had made a special point of the plea that "Williamstown, being an enclosed place, will not be exposed to those temptations and allurements which are peculiarly incident to seaport towns; a rational hope may therefore be indulged that it will prove favorable to the morals and literary improvement of youths who may reside there." This very point nearly wrought the undoing of the infant institution. The inaccessibility of Williamstown, the slender financial resources of northern Berkshire, seemed for a time destined to wreck it. Emory Washburn, of the Class of

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

1817, in later life Governor of Massachusetts, wrote more than forty years after his graduation: —

It is difficult at this day to make anyone understand the perfect isolation of the spot. During my residence in college nothing in the form of a stage-coach or vehicle for public communication ever entered the town. Once a week a solitary messenger, generally on horseback, came over the Florida mountain, bringing us our newspapers and letters from Boston and the eastern parts of the state. Once in a week Mr. Green came up from the South, generally in a one-horse wagon, bringing the county newspapers printed at Stockbridge and Pittsfield. And by some similar mode, and at like intervals, we heard from Troy and Albany. With the exception of these, not a ripple of the commotions that disturbed the world outside of these barriers of hills and mountains ever reached the unruffled calm of our valley life.

Clearly it was “an enclosed place” — with a vengeance.

The second president, Moore, seems to have left Dartmouth for Williams with some understanding that the college would be transferred to a more civilized region. So it would probably have been — perhaps even through the amalgamation with the younger Amherst College which was contemplated in the very foundation of that institution — but for the timely stepping forward

CLASSIC SHADES

of the people of Williamstown with financial aid. This anchored the college where it was, and when Moore had quitted Williams to become the first president of Amherst, taking fifteen students with him, his successor, Griffin, established it firmly in its place. It is fitting that one of the best Georgian college buildings in New England, Griffin Hall, should perpetuate his name. Professor Perry has drawn a memorable picture of him standing across the street while this building was in process of construction, and directing the workmen on top of the belfry by motions of his hand and cries of "Hold," so that the surmounting copper balls and weather vane were placed without preliminary measurements in precisely the right positions. The influence of Griffin certainly played an important part in the making of Mark Hopkins and other eminent and early graduates of Williams.

But the college under his guidance, and indeed through the lifetime of Mark Hopkins, was a place of much simplicity. The dormitory rooms in the earlier days were bare and cold, generally lacking carpets and wall paper, even as the reci-

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

tation rooms were without blackboards, so that teaching by means of chalked figures or designs had to be done on the floors. The springtime mud of the village streets was at one period so deep that when the daughters of a prosperous local worthy walked through the town, a hired man accompanied them with two boards, to lay one progressively before the other in the path they would follow. The annual festival of "Gravel Day" brought out the student body to make the sidewalks passable. "Chip Day" was another such festival, in the spring, when the students cleaned up the rubbish remaining from the chopping of the wood that warmed their rooms in winter.

It was a hardy breed of young men that pursued their studies under such conditions. "They have come from the yeomanry of the country," declared Mark Hopkins in an address at the semicentennial of the college in 1843, "from the plough and the workshop, with clear heads and firm nerves, and industrious habits, and unperverted tastes — in need, it may be, of polish, but susceptible to the highest." The whole necessary annual expense of a Williams student

CLASSIC SHADES

in 1836, according to Mark Hopkins in his Inaugural Address, was less than one hundred dollars, of which the college received but about thirty-three.

The polish of which the student was susceptible was by no means infallibly imparted, if we are to accept the word of Hawthorne, who visited the Williams Commencement of 1838 and wrote in a journal preserved in his *American Note Books* his impressions of a bevy of students whom he encountered: "These were a rough-hewn, heavy set of fellows from the hills and woods of this neighborhood, — great unpolished bumpkins, who had grown up farmer boys and had little of the literary man save green spectacles and black broadcloth (which all of them had not), talking with a broad accent, and laughing clown-like, while sheepishness overspread all, together with a vanity at being students."

The alumni seemed to strike this Bowdoin graduate no more favorably, for some of them he described as "country graduates, rough, brown-featured, schoolmaster-looking, half-bumpkin, half-scholarly figures in black ill-cut broadcloth,

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

their manners quite spoilt by what little of the gentleman there was in them.”

If Hopkins and Hawthorne seem at odds in their pictures of the Williams men of the time, it is to be remembered that one was writing a Semicentennial Address and the other a realistic diary. It is, nevertheless, the fact that in the simpler America of the years before the Civil War the stock that fed the colleges was largely of the fibre which the words of Mark Hopkins suggest, and nowhere was it more truly represented than at Williams. “Cheap bread and costly brains” — a Williams paraphrase of “plain living and high thinking” — constituted for Garfield, even while he was seating Hopkins and his pupil on the traditional log, “the two great supports of the college.”

II

The appropriateness of Mark Hopkins for the presidency of just such a college as Williams was obvious. A Berkshire boy, — born at Stockbridge February 4, 1802, of a family in which the blood of Samuel Hopkins, the New England theologian for whom the “Hopkinsian” theology

CLASSIC SHADES

was named, and of Ephraim Williams, the creator of Williams College, was blended, — he displayed the precocity proper to a future college president. Entering a district school at four, he answered the teacher's initial question, "And where can you read, my little fellow?" with the astonishing words, "Just where you please, sir"; and proceeded at once to the top of his class. As an undergraduate at Williams, — less commendably, but after a fashion which should have made him indulgent to vexatious students in subsequent years, — he befooled President Griffin by submitting a metaphysical essay made up in about equal parts of original writing and of a passage from the Scottish philosopher, Reid, with quotation marks about his own production and none surrounding the words of Reid. Griffin commended the quoted passage, and criticized severely the uncredited philosopher. It was not a pretty trick for a future instructor in morals, but, undiscovered, it wrought him no harm with the college, for after his graduation in 1824 he was invited to become a tutor at Williams, and did, for two years.

More than thirty years later he asked Arthur

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

Latham Perry, of the Class of 1852, to accept a tutorship — which he also did, but not until he had written in his diary his conception of a tutor's task at Williams:—

A tutor, as such, is not greatly respected by students. They find innumerable ways to annoy him. *They lock him in.* They love to play tricks upon him. They will scrape and groan in recitation. They will disturb his slumbers by nocturnal howlings, and by rolling stoves down the stairs. This is not pleasant. He will treat them all politely, yet some of them will insult him. He must bear it, and put a good face upon it, though he smart inwardly. If it be known that he is in love with a young lady in the village, *they will write her name upon the black-board!* And all this would have to be borne with the wisdom of a philosopher and the spirit of a martyr.¹

Perry may have known by this time that he was to marry a Williamstown girl, as Mark Hopkins himself did, but not until 1832, when the future president was a young professor in the college, and Miss Mary Hubbell became his wife. His tutorship — probably even a more trying post in the twenties than in the fifties — was of brief duration. It was followed by a course of study at the Berkshire Medical School in Pittsfield, from which he graduated in 1829. In 1830

¹ See *A Professor of Life*, by Carroll Perry, page 80.

CLASSIC SHADES

he was preparing to enter upon the practice of the medical profession in New York City, when he was called back to Williams as Professor of Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric, and took up the teaching career which was to occupy him continuously until his death fifty-seven years later. When the presidency of the college fell vacant in 1836, the Trustees were skeptical about elevating a man so young as thirty-four to so responsible a post; but a petition from the senior class in favor of the election of Mark Hopkins won the day. "If the boys want him," exclaimed an old Trustee, — one can almost hear his tone of voice, — "let them have him." One obstacle, arising from the fact that a college president in the thirties was expected also to be a Christian minister, had already been removed by his obtaining, in 1833, a license to preach, although his chief professional studies had been in medicine.

It has been said of Mark Hopkins in the generally unrevealing biography of him by one of his successors, President Franklin Carter, that "he was mature when he was young, and young when he was old." The less need, therefore, to



MARK HOPKINS

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

follow his career with any special regard to chronological sequence. An eccentric alumnus, accustomed to the portly Griffin, bluntly informed him when he became president, "You have not much abdominal dignity." This indeed he never acquired. But he possessed the dignity of a tall, spare, awkward man, of aquiline and intellectual aspect, with a pronounced chin, — a feature, as he taught his pupils, belonging to man alone and serving as an index of individual capacity, — with deep-set, bright eyes, so shaded with long, thick lashes that it was hard to tell their color. "Seasoning his words with a gracious voice," wrote one of his admirers, and surely this essential element of personality must have enhanced his power as a lecturer and preacher.

In one of his manuscript letters preserved in the Williams College Library, he wrote in 1845, "Of the pamphlets, and of the Articles which I have published in periodicals, not one was originally written for publication, so that so far as I am an author at all it is rather in spite of myself." This was true of nearly everything he wrote up to the end of his life. His books to-day

CLASSIC SHADES

seem relatively unimpressive, but there can be no doubt that his pulpit and platform appearances moved his hearers deeply. The mystery of personality has indeed its portion of tragedy — that so little of it can be transmitted, except with the rare gift of really original thoughts, through the printed, out-living the spoken, word.

It would be idle to claim for Mark Hopkins the gifts of an original thinker. He was not a great scholar, nor even a great reader. The religious philosophy of life set forth in Butler's *Analogy* and Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* was his chief acquired equipment as a philosopher. The Biblical scholarship and criticism which might have affected his views at least in later life left him untouched. The implications of Darwinism provoked only antipathy and resistance in his thoughts. Even in academic matters such an innovation as the introduction of elective studies encountered his opposition. And in politics, when the college presidents and professors of a pioneering spirit were flocking to the banner of Cleveland, Mark Hopkins became a Massachusetts elector for Blaine. To make the best of the existing order, especially

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

through identifying virtue with happiness, may not unfairly be said to have constituted the chief end of his life and teaching.

The pupil to whom the fame of Mark Hopkins fortuitously owes so much, the James A. Garfield of whom his old master could hardly pronounce higher praise than that "he pursued of his own accord the ends proposed by the Institution," recorded his first impressions of the college president whose kindly response to an inquiry had brought him from Ohio to Williams. On hearing him preach for the first time, Garfield wrote, in a letter: "I *feel* that he is a good man. He certainly is a great thinker, though I should say not a very original one. . . . On the whole, I think he is a great man."

About a month later Garfield heard Emerson for the first time, also in Williamstown, and wrote: "I must say he is the most startlingly original thinker I ever heard. . . . I could not sleep that night after hearing his thunderstorm of eloquent thoughts. It made *me* feel so small and insignificant to hear *him*." These passages are cited, not in any derogation of Mark Hopkins or to point any moral of Emerson's about

CLASSIC SHADES

gods and half-gods, but merely to substantiate the impressions derived from the writings of Hopkins that the secret of his influence could not have been found in the originality of his thoughts. The reality of this influence — to revert yet again to Garfield — is shown in a sentence from a letter, still in manuscript, which he wrote from the House of Representatives to Hopkins in 1876. "I state only the simple truth when I say that your approval is more precious to me than that of any other man in the world."

The very titles of the many books and pamphlets of Mark Hopkins — there are ninety items in the list of his published writings contained in President Carter's biography of him — blunt the expectation of much originality. Baccalaureate and other sermons, addresses, and discourses on various occasions, constitute the bulk of this bibliography. Of the eight books it contains, four are made up of Lowell Institute Lectures delivered in Boston, to the great extension of his reputation and his personal circle. Like the sermons, they cry aloud for the addition of all that force of personality which the delivery of them by Mark Hopkins himself must

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

have provided. In none of these writings can it be said that one finds much to support the frequently quoted declaration of their author, àpropos of Browning, "I too am a mystic."

The fashionable biographer of the moment, showing himself capable of imitating the more obvious but not the more subtle tricks of Mr. Lytton Strachey, could discover bits of record, or opinion, from which it would be possible to reconstruct a Mark Hopkins with plenty of flaws. He would enlarge upon intimations of easy-going inadequacies as a scholar, of imperfect mastery of discipline, of a susceptibility, especially in old age, to flattery. He would do what he could to remove from his pedestal the statued being which Horace E. Scudder contemplated, at the dedication of the Haystack Monument, when Mark Hopkins appeared to him as "the one person who was not out of place in an amphitheatre of mountains."

All these intimations of something short of perfection serve a useful purpose for those who have come after him. Mark Hopkins is made to seem more a human being than his unrestrained eulogists would permit one to believe him, and

CLASSIC SHADES

therefore capable of standing more truly before the eyes of later generations as a living creature, greatly fulfilling his natural function as an instructor of youth.

How did he do it? The answer is not to be found — and this has already been suggested — in the successive volumes of his Lowell Institute Lectures which he employed as textbooks. Look, for example, at one of them, *The Law of Love, and Love as a Law*, obviously arranged for classroom use, and reaching its climax as a guide to life with a chapter on keeping the Sabbath. With all allowances for the comparative unsophistication of the youth of sixty years ago, it is hard to look upon this volume as an inspiring textbook. Yet that is precisely what it became in the hands of its author, applying to its study his own methods of teaching, and in these, as he preëminently could employ them, the secret appears clearly to have lain.

He gave out a lesson in advance, more, it seems, to bring his pupils together in an appropriate frame of mind than with any expectation that it would be closely studied before the hour of meeting. The topics, in all his books, often

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

supplemented by the use of blackboard diagrams which he had employed successfully in his Lowell Lectures, had generally to do with the fundamental moral ideas on which life as he saw it was based. He did not much care whether certain indifferent students came to the classroom or not, though, as a matter of college discipline, they were required to attend.

The hour was devoted ostensibly to a discussion of the assigned topics, but often it ranged far beyond them. "What do *you* think about it?" was his favorite *ad hominem* question. Many of the propositions in his books seem capable of eliciting wide divergencies of opinion. Youth is youth in whatever period, and it is quite impossible to believe that the Williams students of the century now so remote had the docility to accept the word of Mark Hopkins on the underlying issues of life as inevitably the last word. The cultivation of individuality, the drawing forth of views opposed to his own, were what he professed to desire, and doubtless he did, for the resources of his mind and his skill in dialectics gave him an advantage over undergraduate disputants which he must have enjoyed

CLASSIC SHADES

exercising — to the real enlargement of the minds of his pupils. As he grew older his weapon of irony, once freely employed, fell into disuse. Congratulated one day on having cornered several men in a single recitation hour, he replied, with a touch of indignation, "I never do that; I never corner men."

A few reported incidents of his dealings with students suggest a happy relationship with them. There is one story of a young man who had exposed himself to the penalty of dismissal by marrying while still in college. Hoping to obtain mercy, he laid the situation frankly before President Hopkins, who heard the story with patience, and then, to the infinite relief of the youthful bridegroom, exclaimed, "Married, are you? So am I." Another anecdote, told by Dr. Carter, reveals a trace of irony clinging to Mark Hopkins even when he was nearing seventy. He had been telling his class that man is the only animal that laughs, being the only creature with the requisite perception and feeling. A student raised the point that he had a dog at home who sometimes, as he said, "looks up into my face, and I really think he laughs."

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

"When a man laughs," replied Dr. Hopkins, "he generally laughs at something. What do you suppose your dog was laughing at?"

There was even more of a sting in his rebuke to a gabbling student: "Some folks talk because they have something to say, and some because they are leaky!" No record is made of his rejoinder to the student who refused assent to the statement that "this is the best possible system," and when pressed to tell in what respects he could improve upon it, declared, "I would kill off all the bedbugs, mosquitos, and fleas, and make oranges and bananas grow farther north."

Dr. Hopkins was silent — not so his biographer, who solemnly urges, to the credit of the teacher, "that only a student who had been thinking earnestly on the subjects under discussion would have made such a reply." Is it strange that the real Mark Hopkins, who did not lack humor, emerges with difficulty from much of the writing about him?

The real Mark Hopkins, of equal age when young and old, stands forth with a remarkable unity. He was not one person at one period and under one set of circumstances, and another

CLASSIC SHADES

under different conditions. The very terms of his life, so largely centred in Williamstown, in spite of many invitations from churches and colleges to establish himself elsewhere, made for this unity. While still new in his presidency he felt the need of a "manikin," recently imported from France, to illustrate his lectures on the human body, for early and late he sought to identify the physical and the spiritual man in all his teachings. The College could not afford to buy this piece of apparatus. Mark Hopkins, therefore, pledged his own slender resources to its purchase, and paid off the debt thus incurred by lecturing in towns that he could reach over the country roads. The picture of him driving to Stockbridge in a sleigh so fully occupied by the boxed figure that his own legs had to hang out in the cold is the picture of a Puritan philosopher glorifying God after his own resolute fashion.

Through all his presidency he had a thoroughly congenial fellow worker in his younger brother Albert, a professor of natural history, who built with his own hands, reënforced by those of his students, what narrowly escaped being the first

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

astronomical observatory in any American college, and so mingled his science and his religion that for thirty-five years he conducted the daily noonday prayer meetings for students which formed a vital element of his work for the college. The double influence of Albert Hopkins, scientific and religious, was of a reconciling unity after his brother's own heart.

The association of Mark Hopkins with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, of which he was president for thirty years, represented his chief interest beyond the conduct of Williams College, and that was an activity entirely appropriate for the president of a college to which the very origin of American missions was so closely related. His rock-ribbed orthodoxy, revealing itself never more clearly than through his leadership of the American Board, is packed in the nutshell of a passage from a letter he wrote on the death of Emerson in 1882: —

So Emerson is gone. I met him several times, but never had much conversation with him. I was interested in his writings years ago — bought one volume of his *Essays*, and then another, but opened to a place in which he spoke

CLASSIC SHADES

of Christ in a manner so distasteful, not to say shocking to me, that I put up the book and have not read him since till just now.

Here indeed he seems to exult in that very limitation of reading with which President McCosh of Princeton charged him in a review of his *Law of Love*. Hopkins retorted that in spite of his admitted want of reading he had considered all the points raised by his Scottish critic, and a lively controversy on the "foundation of obligation" ensued. It has already been seen, however, that McCosh appreciated to the full the character and influence of Hopkins.

When all is said and done, there was a largeness and nobility about him which accounts amply for his great fame and far-borne influence. "Ye are our epistle," he might well have said, with St. Paul, to the young men whose lives he affected. Out of the cloud of witnesses to the value of his teachings, one may draw a few whose names will speak for many — James A. Garfield, already cited more than once, Samuel C. Armstrong, the founder of Hampton Institute, David A. Wells, economist, John J. Ingalls, Senator from Kansas, Washington Gladden,

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

poet and preacher, G. Stanley Hall, psychologist and educator, Horace E. Scudder, Henry M. Alden, Hamilton W. Mabie, editors and writers. The list might be vastly extended. The burden of its testimony would still be found to lie in character, a point of view, a way of life.

His acquired equipment as a philosopher has been mentioned, together with some of the attributes he did not possess. What he did possess — and this cannot be emphasized too strongly — was the native quality of a memorably great teacher. Through all the ages there have been men of natural wisdom and authority, of powers that sprang from within. It is these men, of whom Mark Hopkins appears to have been one, whose teaching bears its fruit most abundantly in the direction and strengthening of character.

And this is precisely what a college president of the Hopkins type — with the elder Dwight of Yale and Francis Wayland of Brown as fellow representatives of it — could achieve. Such men were essentially men of their own times and essentially teachers, unembarrassed by any mere bigness of the institutions under their control,

CLASSIC SHADES

and therefore free to apply the main weight of their powers to direct instruction. With the growth of all our colleges, with the enormously increased complexity of modern American life, this type of college president — perhaps, forsooth, this type of man — has disappeared; nor are there any signs on the horizon which promise his reappearance. Yet their institutions live on, and in each of them which had such a head as Williams had in Mark Hopkins, the tradition of this figure, woven into the life of the college, though the figure itself grow dim and obsolete in outline, is bound to survive. Through great traditions the new life of an institution is constantly paying its debt to the old.

In 1872, after thirty-six years in the presidency, at the age of seventy, Mark Hopkins resigned his administrative duties, giving, as the first of three good reasons for so doing, "that it may not be asked why I do not resign." For fifteen years longer, up to his death in 1887, he continued his teaching and preaching, apparently with undiminished vigor and success. His physical strength remained almost unabated to the end. In the early morning of June 17, he

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

experienced an unfamiliar sensation in the difficulty of his breathing, and said to his wife, "Mary, this must be death." So, almost instantly, it proved to be. The dignity of the sudden conclusion of his life was of a piece with its entire course.

III

It is entirely characteristic of Williams that its college song, sung with the fervor of "Fair Harvard" in Cambridge and "Alma Mater" in Providence, is "The Mountains," by Washington Gladden, and has for the first line of its chorus, "The mountains, the mountains, we greet them with a song." A favorite Williams tradition is that Emerson once said of the surrounding mountains that their names ought always to be included in the list of the faculty because they were among the greatest teachers associated with the College. It is not so often recalled that the observant Emerson's journals contain an entry: "These mountains give an inestimable worth to Williamstown and Massachusetts. But, for the mountains, I don't quite like the proximity of a college and its noisy students. To enjoy the

CLASSIC SHADES

hills as a poet I prefer simple farmers as neighbors"; as if to say, however good the mountains may be for the college, the college doesn't much help the mountains. But the students are here our chief concern, and there is no question that the mountains of Williamstown have always played their part as teachers, through informal "nature courses" in health of body and spirit, in the enlarging influences of out-of-doors. A "Horticultural and Landscape Gardening Association" was indeed organized while the college was still comparatively young; and now that "Gravel Day" and "Chip Day" are outmoded, "Mountain Day" still holds its own as a venerable and popular college festival.

The smaller college does well thus to emphasize its individual advantages — and at Williams the advantage of the mountains is incalculable. In the nature of the case the greatest scholars — who are not invariably the greatest teachers — are prone to join the faculties of the large universities at or near the centres of population, where libraries, museums, and all the facilities of learning are most surely to be found. In such a college as Williams, an outstanding example of

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

the deliberately smaller institution, who shall say that many youths may not best obtain that education for character, that general preparation for average American life, to which Mark Hopkins quite notably gave an individual and lasting stamp? The former president of a Western college has quoted to me, as if in answer to this very question, the remark of a well-known professor from the University of Wisconsin who had been studying the colleges of the East, among them Williams. "There," he said, "is a college that turns out gentlemen who are not snobs."

Since the death of Mark Hopkins, in 1887, the physical equipment of Williams has been increased and enriched beyond any dreams that he could have entertained. Three clerical presidents — Paul Ansel Chadbourne, Franklin Carter, and Henry Hopkins, a son of Mark Hopkins — have had their day between his and that of his present successor, the first layman to become president of Williams, Harry Augustus Garfield, a son of the most conspicuous of all the sons of Williams. The succession seems almost apostolic, so continuous has been the passing

CLASSIC SHADES

of a definite tradition from one period in the history of the college to another. Nothing seems to have gone as haphazard. Trustees, alumni, and friends, devoted and generous, have united to turn large resources to large, consistent uses.

With its enriched equipment, — dormitories, chapel, athletic fields, library, abounding in the treasures of a bibliophile benefactor, Mr. Alfred C. Chapin, of the Class of 1869, — the Williams of the present must share with other liberally supported institutions the reputation of a “rich man’s college.” This is unfair, if there be any inference that youths of limited means have ceased to resort to it. They are there, as everywhere else, in considerable numbers, availing themselves of the very facilities for self-support which enter into the complete equipment of every modern college. Perhaps for the reason that a country town cannot make ready contacts with so many of these facilities as an urban university, the struggling youths do not afford to a watchful eye so large a recognizable element in the student body at Williams as one may observe elsewhere. Indeed, that body strikes a visitor as remarkably homogeneous, and typical

MARK HOPKINS AND WILLIAMS

in the main of the prosperous America so characteristically represented, let us say, by the larger inland cities and towns of New York and Ohio. To train the young men of this background, as of many other portions of the whole United States, after the academic traditions of Williams, is a challenge of high service to the nation at large. If it is growing increasingly difficult to distinguish the graduate of one college from that of another, it must be said that the Williams man, for the general reasons here set forth, seems to retain his identity longer than most.

In recent years the Williamstown Institute of Politics, an international summer school of affairs, conceived and directed by President Garfield, has made a notable contribution to our national life, besides setting an example already followed by a number of other colleges. Surely it is not stretching too far the analogies between old and new to see in the underlying purpose of this Institute a twentieth-century embodiment of the impulse at Williams, more than a hundred and twenty years ago, which brought together under a haystack in a thunderstorm the little

CLASSIC SHADES

band that took the initial steps towards the organization of American missions. The first missionaries are now seen to have been clumsy experimenters in the delicate nurture of international understandings. Much that they taught and learned has had to be unlearned. But the vision of their generous spirits flew wide afield, and Williamstown, now as then "an enclosed place," has always looked and striven far beyond its own boundaries.

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

IV

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

IN looking closely at one American college after another, the resemblances between them sometimes seem quite as striking as the differences. One of these resemblances is that each is represented by its faithful children as the perfect home of democracy. At no other institution in the land, declares every devotee, does a man stand so squarely on his feet; nowhere else is he so sure to rise or fall in his academic community on his own merit, without regard to the artificial influences of wealth and social place. With unanimous voice, moreover, one institution after another repudiates the charge that it is a "rich man's college," and points with pride to statistics setting in array the vast sums of money over and above the income from scholarship funds earned by students who are working their way through college. In the face of these figures, the very idea of a "rich man's college" begins to look mythical.

CLASSIC SHADES

Then there is the common quality that goes by the name of "loyalty." Dear old This and dear old That hold an equal place in the affection and devotion of their sons, whether as undergraduates imbued with the "spirit" of the place or as alumni charged with sentiment for Alma Mater. An experience of two institutions, one in its first quarter century, the other celebrating its quarter millennium while I was a resident student, has revealed clearly this identical loyalty. When any college claims a préëminence in the imponderables of democracy and devotion, I am accordingly disposed to apply the corrective of a certain skepticism.

The fact is that our American colleges and universities have been subjected in this twentieth century to the general influences of standardization which have affected many phases of national life. They have not yet suffered precisely the fate of chain stores, chain newspapers, and chain hotels. But it seems increasingly harder to distinguish, by any process of generalization, the graduates of one college from those of another. The college man — or woman — is, to be sure, fairly separable from his

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

noncollegiate brother or sister. And within the colleges, at least those for men, the groups from the high schools, from the endowed schools of which Andover and Exeter are the outstanding types, and from the boarding schools typified especially by the "church schools," can be identified without much difficulty. Indeed it is a question whether the schools are not now even more effectual than the colleges in stamping their students with whatever distinctive attributes they may derive from the outward circumstances of education. It follows from this that the college in which one preparatory school group or another prevails takes some of its special color from that group.

What has all this to do with Princeton? Only this — that Princeton, as one of the few American colleges with a long history, is to be distinguished from its sister institutions largely in the light of that history. In the present century its development, under the designation of a university, has been very much its own; it resembles Harvard and Yale, in its university structure, hardly more than it does the great State Universities of the West. And it holds its individual place largely because of its history,

CLASSIC SHADES

and especially through the influence of a few of its great leaders. Among these James McCosh, its President from 1868 to 1888, a man of distinguished personality and powers, must be recognized especially for his work in preparing the way for the conversion of the ancient College of New Jersey into the modern Princeton University.

I

There is one particular in which Princeton may be counted unique — and that is in the curious coincidences and parallels to be found in its history. The short tenures of office by the eighteenth-century presidents, doomed to untimely deaths, begin the story. It is continued by the strange successions of father-in-law to son-in-law, Jonathan Edwards as the third president following Aaron Burr, father of the unhappy conspirator, as the second; and of son-in-law to father-in-law, Samuel Stanhope Smith as the seventh president following John Witherspoon as the sixth. Even stranger is the coincidence that the two Presidents of the United States who were graduates of Princeton, James Madison and Woodrow Wilson, each

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

served as chief magistrate of the nation during a foreign war, — the War of 1812 was indeed known as “Madison’s War,” as the World War could never have been called Wilson’s, — and that Wilson’s first inauguration took place precisely one hundred years, to the very day, after Madison’s second. Yet another coincidence appears in the importation of two Scottish presidents, eminent Presbyterian ministers of vigorous ways of thinking in their successive centuries, men of potent influence in the history of Princeton, John Witherspoon in 1768, James McCosh, exactly a hundred years later, in 1868. They died at Princeton, one in 1794, the other in 1894, on November days within one of an even century apart. All these circumstances may of course seem somewhat trivial and superficial, yet it is not entirely fantastic to look upon them as upon those minor circumstances in the life of a family which join its ever-changing present with a lengthening past, and impart a certain unity to the whole. With this unity goes a sense of solidarity, and in the possession of that sense Princeton stands high among the older American colleges.

CLASSIC SHADES

With the sense of solidarity, springing no doubt in part from the large measure of homogeneity in the student body and in part from the segregation of this body in a small community with the college for its overwhelming central fact, goes a strong sense of that very real emotion already noted under the somewhat hard-driven term "loyalty." So authentic a spokesman for Princeton as Mr. Jesse Lynch Williams has even written: "However catholic-minded her training may make her sons in other respects, upon the question of the relative excellence and desirability of American seats of learning, Princeton turns out the most narrow-minded, bigoted lot of alumni of all the college graduates in the country." For this sentiment still another Princetonian of authority, Mr. Robert Bridges, may have accounted, at least in part, when he wrote: "The usual disillusionment of going back to an old haunt and finding it small or ugly, and the glamour gone, never happens at Princeton. It is one of the few places that has kept pace with our dreams."

In point of antiquity the few American colleges that antedate the War of Independence may

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

fairly be called ancient. When the first of the two Scottish presidents of Princeton came to it in 1768, it had just passed the age of twenty-one. The twenty years through which John Witherspoon directed its affairs were big with the future of the nation. He, as a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, and his college, as the very scene of the Battle of Princeton, were closely identified with national beginnings. The beginnings of the college itself were more strictly local, and no one of his five predecessors in the presidency held office long enough to print upon the college any individual stamp. It was absurd of Dr. Holmes, in his poem at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Harvard, to detect in the soil of Princeton the stamp of Jonathan Edwards's "iron heel" since, after assuming office with many misgivings on the score of his health and nature, Edwards died within five weeks. The distinctive quality of the early college did proceed from its foundation, as an accessible academy for the youth of the Middle Colonies, under influences highly Presbyterian, the disciples of an independent "Log College" in Pennsylvania representing especially among

CLASSIC SHADES

the originators of the college a comparative freedom of opinion in ecclesiastical matters. The first charter was granted, however, by a Church of England royal governor, John Hamilton, in 1746, and confirmed and extended the next year by another, Jonathan Belcher, a graduate of Harvard. This charter was frankly undenominational, and provided as fully for instruction in science as in religion.

It is particularly to the credit of this colonial chief magistrate that he would not have the first building at Princeton named, in honor of his benefactions and support, Belcher Hall, but gave it himself the name of Nassau Hall, "to the immortal Memory of the Glorious King William the Third who was a Branch of the illustrious House of Nassau." The very name of Princeton, interchangeable in early times with Prince's Town and Princetown, a village situated midway between New York and Philadelphia on the King's Highway, with neighboring settlements called Kingston, Queenston, and Princessville, suggests a royal background, harmonious with the college charter. One of the architects of Nassau Hall, however, was — as if to identify

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

the early college with the colonies — the architect also of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Nassau Hall, still one of the chief glories of the Princeton campus and a rallying point of Princeton sentiment, was, at the time of its erection, the largest stone structure on the American continent. Before its occupancy, which began in 1756, the few students had been gathered in and about the parsonages of the first president, the Reverend Jonathan Dickinson, a graduate of Yale, at Elizabeth Town, and of the second president, the Reverend Aaron Burr, at Newark. It was indeed counted an advantage to move the infant college from Newark to a place “more sequestered from the various temptations attending a promiscuous concourse with the world, that theatre of folly and dissipation.” The year after the establishment of the college in Princeton Burr died, and in the decade following three other presidents — Edwards, Davies, and Finley — held office. Then, in 1768, came Wither-
spoon, with the blood of John Knox in his veins, and for the first time a powerful Princeton personality began to make itself felt. The college was old enough, moreover, to begin exercising

CLASSIC SHADES

that influence so like the influence of human beings that an institution may be seen to acquire a personality of its own. The very name of Alma Mater betokens personality, and the strongest tie that binds the younger to an older being. The remarkable strength of such a tie at Princeton is beyond question.

The miracle of Nassau Hall, as a central shrine of this sentiment, is that it is standing at all. Three times on the day of the Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777, it was in hands hostile each to each, changing from British to American, and back to British. An American cannon ball, as the day neared its end, destroyed — some say decapitated — a portrait of George II in the prayer hall, leaving a frame soon to be filled by the portrait of Washington by Charles Wilson Peale which still adorns it. The building was hardly more than a shell when the battle ended; yet it was ready to house the Continental Congress in 1783, and there that Congress received the first news of the Definitive Treaty of Peace with England and welcomed the first foreign minister accredited to the United States. On one occasion early in the nineteenth century,

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

and on two others as the century grew older, the building suffered destructive fires — the first set by turbulent students at a time (1802) when Princeton sentiment was running lamentably low. A bomb known as the “great cracker,” exploded at another such time (1814) by rebellious youths, justified its name by cracking the walls of the building from top to bottom. If the spirit of infidelity that disturbed other American colleges in the years following the French Revolution was somewhat less conspicuous at Princeton, the spirit of riot, manifested in a “Great Rebellion” and a “Reign of Terror,” bespoke a collegiate frame of mind which made the very survival of Nassau Hall seem a special dispensation of Providence.

Yet President Witherspoon had provided the students and graduates of Princeton with abundant occasion for pride in the college. Summoned from Scotland as a distinguished preacher and philosopher, — an early exponent of the philosophic doctrine of realism or common sense, — he was swept by the current of events into the rushing stream of American affairs, and identified both himself and his college with the struggle for

CLASSIC SHADES

independence. The situation of the college, in the very pathway of contending armies, inevitably made some contribution to this end. After the signing of the Declaration of Independence, on which John Witherspoon's autograph appeared as distinct, though hardly so conspicuous, as John Hancock's, the students themselves were in no mood for study, and the President disbanded the college. Even when its exercises were resumed, there were many interruptions, due chiefly to the ruinous state of Nassau Hall. But the President's example of public service was contagious, and the number of Princeton graduates who held posts of leadership in governmental, military, religious, and intellectual affairs in the early years of our national life is a special point of Princeton pride, having its focus in Witherspoon himself.

With all the admiration he evoked, an element of affection was blended, for he was liberally endowed with lovable human qualities. Who can help liking to think of him at his country place called "Tusculum," — that blessed word which would have delighted the Ciceronian soul of Mrs. Blimber, — where his students, lacking

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

athletics, worked for him in fields and garden, and whence he dismissed a delegation of them which had come to request a day's holiday in celebration of his second marriage, with a grant of three days' liberty, preceded by an all-round potation to the bride's health?

Since this is no minute chronicle of Princeton and its presidents, a short cut "cross lots" must be taken from Witherspoon to McCosh. The first of these Scotsmen died in 1794 — while waiting, in blindness, but characteristically alert, for the reading of the latest newspaper obtainable. Before the coming of the second a vital part of the nineteenth century had passed — all the bewildered years before the Civil War, and the war itself. Witherspoon's fame had begun, even in his early day, to bring many Southerners to Princeton, and when the students from the Confederate States sadly left their Northern college mates at the outbreak of the war — fifty-six of them, cheered at parting, on one day of April, 1861 — there was an approximate loss of one hundred out of three hundred students. At one such leave-taking the national flag was nailed above the cupola of Nassau Hall, and all the

CLASSIC SHADES

students, Southern and Northern, joined in singing the "Star Spangled Banner," accompanied by the violin of a Mississippian. It appears that a gale had already bent the cupola rod, with flag attached, towards the North, and that this symbolic leaning remained undisturbed throughout the war, but the diversity of the college enrollment in 1860 was indicated by the attendance of students from twenty-six of the thirty-two States then in the Union. The college, however, was small — the three hundred, in round numbers, of this time representing a handsome growth from the low point of seventy in 1829.

The fact is that through much of the nineteenth century Princeton was a small college in a small town, still awaiting that full measure of beautification by the architecture of building and landscape which has done so much for its present loveliness. With almost the only exceptions of Joseph Henry and Arnold Guyot in science, the professors, before the coming of McCosh, were men of local rather than national repute. From 1812 onward, moreover, the immediate proximity of the Princeton Theological

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

Seminary, a separate institution from the College of New Jersey yet sharing its grounds and buildings and to a large extent dominating the college through their "interlocking directorates," imparted to the whole academic community a savor of rigid Presbyterianism. The force of this influence may be inferred from a single incident drawn from Professor V. L. Collins's *Princeton*. Here it is seen that two students asking President Ashbel Green's permission to "ride out" one day in 1813 met with refusal on the ground that they had violated the Sabbath. "When they inquired what they had done," wrote the student who recorded the little episode, "it turned out that they had thrown a stone at a tree on the campus on Sunday."

It is small wonder that college students so held in leading strings, so subjected besides to espionage on the part of the authorities and to the requirements of an iron-bound curriculum, should have conducted themselves more like schoolboys than maturing men. Their pranks were countless, their customs, with traces that survive, were strange. Many pages would be

CLASSIC SHADES

needed to deal with the Cannon "Rape" and "War," resulting in those Princeton victories over Rutgers to which the Revolutionary cannons long planted near Nassau Hall bear testimony; with the more modern "Polers' Recess," during which, on evenings before examinations, men who would be described elsewhere as "grinding," "digging," or "boning" open their windows at a fixed hour and rend the campus air with all manner of noises; with historic "horn-sprees," "horsing" of freshmen, and commencement revels, once including even the baiting of a bull with his horns tied to one of the campus cannons.

Of course there was much besides the cakes and ale of youth. The two "Halls" — Whig and Clio — clubs that still survive from their eighteenth-century beginnings gave, before the days of athletic and social allurements, an admirable training in thinking and speaking on one's feet. The respectable proportion of students in training for the ministry, especially Presbyterian, could hardly have failed to impart something of seriousness to the student body. Had the effort to establish a Princeton law

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

school at about the middle of the nineteenth century met with success, had it been possible even to attempt anything of the sort with medicine, the college might have seemed less completely collegiate. Yet as a college, with obvious limitations in the fields of higher learning and independent thought, it throve through the forty-five years of direction by Presidents Carnahan and Maclean which ended in 1868, and the office to which James McCosh was elected in that year manifestly presented great opportunities to the right man.

II

These opportunities were the greater because the Civil War, like the War of Independence, had wrought more harm to Princeton than to any other Northern college. Not only had it lost many students, but a large proportion of its alumni in the South inevitably broke with all Northern affiliations. The task of McCosh therefore resembled that of Witherspoon as one of rehabilitating a college after the prostration of war time. For this task he proved himself entirely the right man — and he came at precisely

CLASSIC SHADES

the right time, when the general listlessness and poverty of the American college were on the point of conversion into the zeal and affluence that now prevail.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke has described Dr. McCosh as "one of the Scotchmen who make the best kind of an American," and again as born in Scotland but born also "an American and Princetonian." Of Covenanter, Lowland stock, like John Witherspoon, of the same Ayrshire background with Robert Burns, this son of a farmer, born April 1, 1811, close to the "bonnie Doon" of Burns's song, had all those early advantages which are most clearly recognized as such in later life. To his hard-working parents he could pay a full measure of respect. There was plenty of stiff, primitive schooling and religion. He tells of Scottish districts in which the Book of Proverbs was used as a textbook in schools, with good results in caninness. In such a district he might well have been trained. He relates this anecdote of himself as a boy: "I remember being placed on one horse, to lead a second horse behind me by a halter; I held by the halter till I was pulled over the horse's tail, — a very

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

picture of the young Scotchman sticking by a cause which he might easily abandon." (Such a story would indeed be appropriate to more than one eminent Princeton president of Scottish descent.) He was started early towards the ministry, beginning his study of Latin at nine, and entering the University of Glasgow at thirteen. Five years there and five immediately following years at the University of Edinburgh, richer in its human contacts, strengthened both his mental and his social powers. Unfriended at Glasgow, he learned something of social needs which he would not permit "his boys" to suffer at Princeton. In Edinburgh his wits were quickened by the teaching of Sir William Hamilton in philosophy, Chalmers in theology, Jameson in natural history, and others — not least his fellow students. A story of his later life reports his recalling his Edinburgh days: "I have drrunk whuskey with men who have drrunk whuskey with Burrns": but then pausing, for he was entertaining students in his own house at Princeton and was now a foe of intemperance, he went on, "Um-m-er — I have *talked* with men who have drrunk whuskey with Burrns."

CLASSIC SHADES

The stories of McCosh that survive at Princeton are many. Reduced to print they inevitably lose something of their racy quality; when told by word of mouth, always with attempts, though of unequal success, to reproduce a Scottish accent, they rarely fail to impart to the hearer the positive Caledonian flavor of McCosh himself. His career in Scotland before he came to Princeton — a rich career that carried him to the age of fifty-seven — was characteristically Scottish. He became a Presbyterian minister, highly successful in two rural parishes, a leader in the Free Church movement away from government control in ecclesiastical matters, a philosophic scholar in the field of natural theology, producing in 1850 his first important book, the *Method of the Divine Government, Physical and Moral*. It was also in 1850 that a Queen's University was established in Ireland, and to its college in Belfast McCosh's book won him his appointment as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics. There was opposition in Ireland to this elevation of a Scotchman, but when Thackeray had turned it to ridicule in some rollicking verses written for *Punch* in his familiar Hibernian vein, McCosh

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

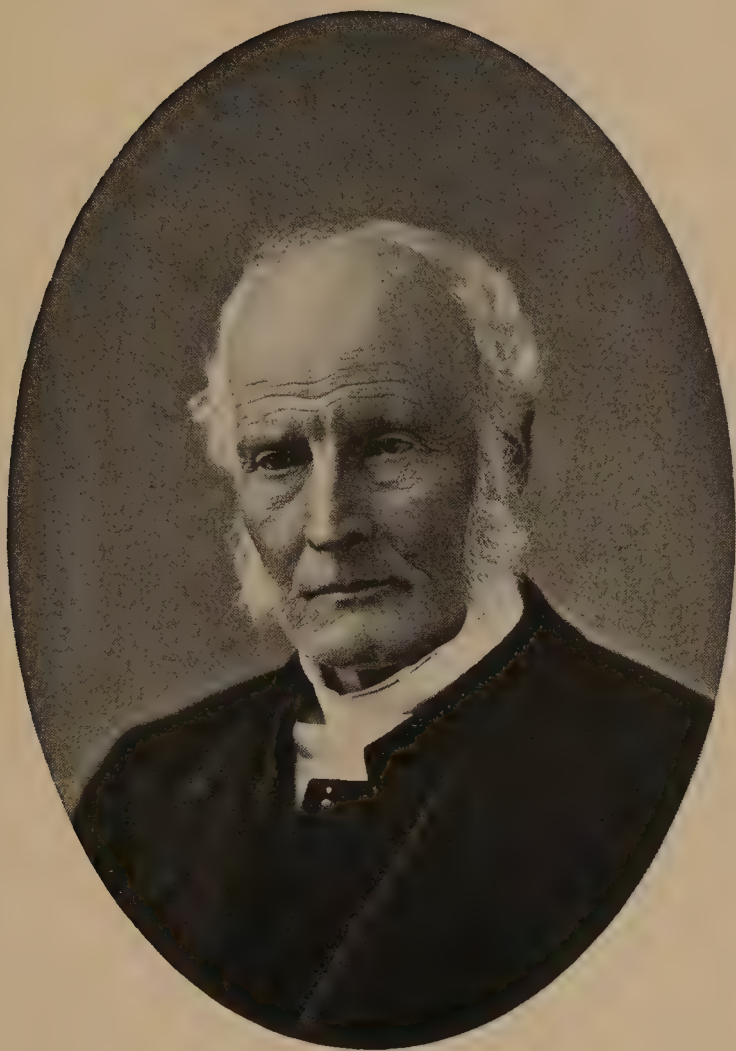
entered upon a seventeen years' term of academic and public life in Ireland, which served the double purpose of furthering the intellectual and spiritual interests that surrounded him and preparing him thoroughly for the larger opportunities awaiting him at Princeton. Through it all he remained so consistently the Scotch Presbyterian minister that when he visited Berlin in 1858, and was invited by the King's secretary to attend the theatre with him on a Sunday evening, he "let them know at once," as he put it "that I did not come to Berlin to see plays, told him how the Scotch people read their Bibles on Sabbath."

A visit to the United States in 1866 could hardly have embarrassed him by such problems of conduct, for he came as a traveler ready to preach here and there and to learn something of our colleges, and Sunday evening theatre parties would have been as alien to his hosts as to himself. His preaching and his personality produced everywhere so strong an impression that when, in 1868, the presidency of Princeton fell vacant through the resignation of John Maclean, the trustees gave heed to an editor's

CLASSIC SHADES

suggestion that James McCosh would fill the place better than any available American, and elected him president. On accepting the election he wrote: "I devote myself and my remaining life under God to old Princeton and the religious and literary interests with which it is identified, and, I fancy, will leave my bones in your graveyard beside the great and good men who are buried there, hoping that my spirit may mount to communion with them in heaven."

It was an act of boldness on the part of a man of fifty-seven to cut loose from all the associations of a lifetime and take up in a new land a new work of large responsibility. The spirit in which he did this was also bold. He has himself told us that as he crossed the Atlantic on his way to his inauguration he pondered seriously what should be his public attitude towards Darwinism, already ten years before the world, generally opposed by others of his own degree of orthodoxy, yet clear to him as having "nothing atheistic in it if properly understood." The question he put himself on shipboard was "whether I should at once avow my convictions or keep them in abeyance because of the preju-



JAMES McCOSH

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

dices of religious men, and lest I might unsettle the faith of the students committed to my care. I decided to pursue the open and honest course, as being sure that it would be the best in the end. I was not a week in Princeton till I let it be known to the upper classes of the college that I was in favor of evolution properly limited and explained; and I have proclaimed my views in lectures and papers in a number of cities and before various associations, literary and religious."

This sounds simple enough to-day, but sixty years ago, when even a scientist like Louis Agassiz was opposing Darwinism on the score of its antagonism to religion, such a position as that of McCosh bespoke a refreshing independence of thought. Indeed, his whole effect upon the Princeton to which he came was that of an invigorating breeze from the sea. The listlessness and poverty already noted as prevailing at this time throughout the colleges of America were plainly apparent at Princeton. McCosh found the surrounding country "resembling the south of England as much as one country can be like another." He proceeded to lay out the college

CLASSIC SHADES

grounds "somewhat on the model of the demesnes of English noblemen." Of the college itself he said to himself and to others, "We have a fine old college here, with many friends; why should we not make it equal to any college in America, and in the end to any in Europe?"

Better buildings were sorely needed. Some of the recitation rooms were, in his own words, "temptations to disorder." He found the means to erect many new ones. At his inauguration he promised the students "a gymnasium for the body as well as for the mind," and rejoiced in his old age to recall the answering "shout, sufficient to rend the heavens." Within two years a gymnasium was opened. His pursuit of possible benefactors seems to have been relentless. There is one story of his attending the funeral of a rich parishioner of Dr. John Hall in New York, and telling this influential minister that he proposed to call that very day on the new-made widow to ask about a memorial gift to Princeton. Dr. Hall dissuaded him from such precipitancy. "I told him," said McCosh, "that I should call on her the next day." Here is

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

the spirit of your true beggar — for something he thinks really worth getting.

Princeton instantly became to Dr. McCosh “my college” — or “me college,” to set down more literally the sound of his quoted words. So he spoke also and often of “me boys,” though they bear a more dignified possessive in the glowing sonnet of Mr. Robert Bridges which justifies so fully its frequent quotation by writers about McCosh. His devotion to his college reared many new structures — some already long outmoded — on the campus of his day. He extended, moreover, the resources of teaching by enlarging the faculty and revising the scope of college studies. But it was the personal quality of the man, his personal relations with the students of his day, that made the memory of him precisely what it is. “They call me Jimmy, and crow like cocks” was a complaint he made of the young Princetonians, little realizing what an epithet of endearment this “Jimmy” was to become.

It is hard to overestimate the value of mere physical good looks in a leader of men, and anyone who casts more than a casual glance at the

CLASSIC SHADES

portraits of Dr. McCosh in the Faculty Room of Nassau Hall and the University Club of New York, or at the sculptured head in the University Library, surviving the body of the Saint-Gaudens statue which was destroyed by one of the fires that have wrought such havoc at Princeton, must carry away with him a lasting impression of the mingled beauty of strength and tenderness. "You see him," said his successor, President Patton, "tall, majestic; his fine head resting on stooping shoulders; his classic face; with a voice like a trumpet; magisterial; with no mock humility; expecting the full deference that was due his office, his years, and his work."

In faculty meetings — it is told by survivors of his day — he would thump the table and insist with overpowering vigor on a point for which he was arguing. When he retired from the presidency and continued his teaching of philosophy at Princeton, — "a model ex-president," — he declared, "I allowed no one to meddle with me when I was President, and I won't meddle with Dr. Patton." Thus tenacious of his views, he nevertheless thought better of

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

those, whether teachers or students, who would stand up on their feet and contend for theirs.

His own respect for honesty has its illustrations. For one there is the story that when he would appear on the campus, attempting, after the fashion of the time, to quell a student disturbance, he would call out to the fleeing miscreants, "I know ye all — that is, within one or two!" For another, a well-authenticated tale is that one of his sons showing a young visitor about a museum out of which the President's office then opened. Here stood a reconstructed dinosaur, or some such prehistoric monster, with the toes of one foot differing in color from the rest of the creature. The son was explaining that these were artificial, made merely to complete the figure. "Nae," came a deep voice from Dr. McCosh's office, "the toes were what they began with." Less exact, yet more engaging, he appeared one day in his old age when a student on the campus ran to help him to his feet after one of the falls from which he was not immune. "That's four times to-day," he murmured in chagrin, "I'll tell Isabella two."

Isabella, a daughter of a Scotch physician,

CLASSIC SHADES

Alexander Guthrie, was his beloved wife, a true helpmeet, a woman of equal common sense and kindness. Her devoted care of sick students was commemorated by the erection of the Isabella McCosh Infirmary, of which the original building has been replaced in recent years by a modern hospital bearing the same designation. Remembering his own loneliness as a student at Glasgow, Dr. McCosh prided himself on holding a personal interview with every student that entered or left the college, and on entertaining each member of every class in his own house at least once a year — no small matter while the college through the twenty years of his presidency was increasing its enrollment from 264 to 603. Still another point of contact with the student body outside the classroom was established through the well-remembered "Library Meetings" in his house. These were evening meetings, at first small, but at their apex bringing together perhaps a hundred and fifty students, for the reading of a paper, sometimes by a distinguished visitor, sometimes by Dr. McCosh himself, and an informal discussion in which the "boys" were specially encouraged to take part.

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

As Dr. McCosh in his old age looked back upon his early ministry in Scotland, he wrote, "I see that I was wanting in tenderness. I had more of the manner of Paul than of Jesus or of John." When he came to Princeton an excess of tenderness would have undone him. Customs which he considered, and called, degrading were rife in the college. Hazing in various forms was peculiarly obnoxious to him. His drastic measures in handling an early offense of this kind, with a clear intimation that a criminal court and jail sentences stared the offenders in the face, produced an excellent effect. With equal vigor he banished the Greek-letter fraternities from Princeton, where their effects were regarded as baleful, and strengthened the ancient debating clubs, Whig and Cliosophic Halls. Now the clubs of Prospect Avenue have overshadowed the Halls, yet the longevity of Princeton practices reveals itself to an autumnal visitor in the black caps, cravats, and stockings worn by freshmen, as if in mourning for their low estate. It is not solely by reason of such phenomena that Mr. John Corbin, in giving a designation to Princeton among the universities of the land,

CLASSIC SHADES

dubbed it some years ago "the Collegiate University."

Princeton was the College of New Jersey when Dr. McCosh came to it in 1868. It still bore that title on his retirement twenty years later. Not until 1896, at the Sesquicentennial of the College, did it become Princeton University. Then arches were reared over Nassau Street, with the mottoes, AVE VALE COLLEGIUM NEOCAESARIENSE and AVE SALVE UNIVERSITAS PRINCETONIENSIS.

Dr. McCosh had died two years before, yet it was to him that the credit for placing the institution on the path that led to this change is justly ascribed. It was under him that fellowships for advanced study and organized graduate work leading to the higher nonprofessional degrees were first established. With his knowledge of the standards and methods of European scholarship, it must have appalled him when he took up his work to find the meagrely equipped college library open only once a week and for one hour. The schoolboy spirit of the place was widely at variance with the university spirit he had known at home. In the year before his

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

retirement he wrote in his annual report, "It is not necessary in a university to have professional schools. A university is a place of learning. . . . The ancient universities of Europe as they were formed out of the schools were designated *Studium Generale*, a phrase applicable to our present Princeton institution."

From this conception of a university the Princeton of to-day has grown — not without good precedent in American nomenclature, for the College of Rhode Island, founded in 1764, became Brown University as early as 1804. The term "university" is indeed so variously used in the United States that even if it is not employed at Princeton in the sense now most widely accepted, there can be no legitimate objection to the name. The "collegiate university" — to apply Mr. Corbin's apt term to an institution of higher learning in which the undergraduates far outnumber all other students and the emphasis of graduate work is laid chiefly upon collegiate studies, both "humane" and scientific — has its own obvious contribution to make to the general stream of American civilization.

CLASSIC SHADES

The McCosh tradition, particularly through its identification of the present university with a powerful individual influence, is strong at Princeton. This may perhaps be suggested most clearly by joining to impressions derived from various sources the special illumination imparted by some unprinted words of a distinguished official of the University, who studied under McCosh in his prime. As a boy in Philadelphia, expecting soon to enter Yale, this admirer first saw Dr. McCosh one day on the street. The potency of his physical aspect has already been noted. Its instant effect upon the school-boy was to make him declare, "I go where he is president." The quality in McCosh which impressed him most deeply as college student and teacher was his sagacity, his rare ability to distinguish the permanent from the transient, the real from the illusory. Animated by extraordinary energy, he demanded much of his subordinates, but no more than of himself.

His speech and his thought were equally vigorous. Though recognizing the extension of human and scholastic interests in his time by favoring some election of studies after a student

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

had been grounded for two years in the foundations of traditional learning, he was wholeheartedly opposed to the free elective system which President Eliot was introducing at Harvard. In 1885 the two presidents met for a public debate of the question in New York. The positiveness with which McCosh was prepared to maintain his view of the matter is stamped upon this sentence from his opening remarks: "President Eliot has formulated the question in a manner that is large, loose, vague, showy, and plausible, but I think I shall be able to show the fallacies that underlie his reasonings." No less characteristic of him was his remembered remark to the scholar that has been cited: "President Eliot's educational theories are all wrong, but in every other respect — imitate him."

Another college president of his time with whom he came into conflict was Mark Hopkins of Williams — in a newspaper controversy that followed his unfavorable review of one of Hopkins's books. The manuscripts of the articles written by both of the embattled philosophers are preserved in the Library of Williams College,

CLASSIC SHADES

and on the back of the last sheet written by McCosh may be found, in his own script, and in testimony to what has been said about his generosity to opponents, the words, "I began this discussion with a profound veneration for the character and abilities of Dr. Hopkins, and I close it with the same sentiment."

Even if I were capable of discussing to any fruitful purpose the distinctive place of James McCosh among philosophers and theologians, it would be through trespass upon space allotted to president and college. The bibliography of his writings in the biography by Professor Sloane fills some thirteen pages with the titles of books and fugitive productions. It is enough in this place to recall and record the fact that his philosophy was that of realism, which, like the good American he became, he advocated with a special zeal as the philosophy proper to his adopted country.

The serene old age that intervened between his retirement at seventy-seven and his death, on November 16, 1894, at eighty-three, was passed at Princeton. Teaching and speaking almost to the end, warmly beloved, — all the

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

more because he was a "character," a theme of plentiful anecdote, in addition to all that his duties demanded of him, — a deeply stirring influence during his lifetime in his own college and far beyond its immediate circle, he affected unquestionably the development of Princeton since his day, and remains a memorable, somewhat exotic, yet vital, figure in the annals of American education.

III

The Princeton of to-day, in comparison with the Princeton to which Dr. McCosh emigrated sixty years ago, is a place of such extraordinary beauty that one hardly dares to think what sixty years more, with the further growth of trees and vines and the mellowing touch of time, will do to it. Woodrow Wilson, its president from 1902 to 1910, — a term too short for the fulfillment of all his academic and social plans, yet long enough for bringing to a head certain problems which the college is still engaged in working out, — once accounted in striking words for the change that has come over the outward aspect of Princeton: "By the very simple device

CLASSIC SHADES

of building our new buildings in the Tudor Gothic style we seem to have added to Princeton the age of Oxford and of Cambridge; we have added a thousand years to the history of Princeton by merely putting those lines in our buildings which point every man's imagination to the historic traditions of learning in the English-speaking race." Since President Wilson's day at Princeton the Graduate College, under the direction of Dean West, has reared its walls and its superb tower in memory of Grover Cleveland in forms of beauty deeply impressive, and many other buildings on the campus itself have shown how quickly an air of academic antiquity can be acquired.

The urbanity and stately grace of the present Princeton, in both its buildings and its landscape, produce a profound impression upon a wanderer from sterner academic climes. The prevailing atmosphere of the place is symbolized for such a wanderer by finding, instead of the more raucous command, "Keep off the grass," to which he is accustomed, the single persuasive syllable "Please," painted on signs for the protection of greensward. The general atmos-

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

pheric suggestion is not so much of *per aspera* as *per mollia ad astra*. Yet as one steps from the campus to the well-groomed playing fields and golf links closely adjacent, one can but recall the vigor and prowess of Princeton athletes, who received their first substantial encouragement from President McCosh — with results even in his lifetime that led an Oxford don to ask him, "Pray, are you the president of a gymnastic institution?" Surely the lovely surroundings have wrought no softness on the physical side of college life.

In the amenities of social existence one cannot help feeling that the charming clubhouses to which a street almost within the college grounds is wholly given over must provide an admirable background for training. If eighty-five per cent of the two upper classes win membership in these clubs, against the small fraction of each class that attains distinction at Yale through election to the senior societies, one must reflect nevertheless upon the fate of the remaining fifteen per cent. The "bickering" of Princeton is done with at an earlier point in the college course than the "tap-day" at Yale, and can hardly be taken

CLASSIC SHADES

quite so seriously. Certainly the wider range of clubs at Princeton must free the undergraduate from wishing to conform himself so faithfully to a single type as he must be tempted to do at Yale. Yet there the clubhouses stand, — with a reality demanding special rulings on “club eligibility” in the University Catalogue, — and one would still like to hear more from and about the excluded fifteen per cent. The questions raised by Greek-letter fraternities are not all answered by decrees of banishment.

On the intellectual side the influence of Dr. McCosh, as of his successors, was altogether that of an eminent leader in scholarship. One of these successors, President Wilson, felt that the social structure of the college might be modified to the advantage of its intellectual and human interests, and proposed changes, relating particularly to the clubs, deeply and tenaciously rooted in the affections of the alumni. His plan did not prevail, and the “preceptorial method,” which he devised for the stimulation of undergraduate interest in studies through a closer relation with the teaching force, failed of the financial support required

PRINCETON AND JAMES McCOSH

for a complete testing of its possibilities. However, it is still in operation, and is believed to have accomplished much. In more recent years a further stimulus to intellectual activity has resulted from a requirement of choosing a special field of study in the junior and senior years and passing an examination on the chosen subject as a whole before receiving a Princeton degree. In different colleges the appreciable increase in "student interest" since the war is ascribed to different causes. At Princeton it may fairly be related both to the preceptorial plan and to the new programme of junior and senior studies. Whatever the causes may be, there is one significant result: the college library, opened only for an hour a week when Dr. McCosh came to Princeton, is now in such demand for the reading required of students that it is kept open on every week day from eight in the morning until midnight. When I left it one night not long ago at 11 P.M. it was by no means deserted.

The present head of the University, President John Grier Hibben, won his academic spurs in philosophy and logic. As in the days of McCosh, the President is still at the head of the depart-

CLASSIC SHADES

ment of philosophy. This subject still heads the list of studies outlined in the University Catalogue. The circumstance is not without its suggestion that Princeton, innocent as it is of the professional schools, which in other institutions may provide a utilitarian training for life, still gives its chief emphasis to the general rather than the specialized discipline of the mind. Thus it stands to-day, a shining example of the older American college, grown to a mighty stature, but not through any sharp changes in the natural direction of its growth, into just such a university as the far-searching vision of James McCosh must have contemplated.

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF CHARLES
WILLIAM ELIOT

V

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT

SPEED and change obscure the far-away and gradual beginnings of many familiar things — including colleges. The growing commonness of common denominators makes also for a tendency to think that institutions in which points of resemblance are constantly piling up must always have been much alike.

Take, for example, Harvard — once the butt of such threadbare sayings as “You can always tell a Harvard man, but you can’t tell him much,” now paired with Yale in the rapidly aging anecdote of the twins already mentioned in these pages, who, after acquiring all the hall marks that New Haven and Cambridge respectively had to bestow, still could not be told apart. It is true enough that in this day of standardized products young collegians look as much alike as young Chinamen. It is nevertheless the fact that in its origin and through

CLASSIC SHADES

most of its nearly three centuries Harvard has possessed certain distinctive characteristics, whether to its advantage or not opinions are bound to differ.

I

Where Harvard stands completely alone is in the first fifty-seven years of its history, when it was the only college in North America. The founding of William and Mary in 1693 did not break in upon its loneliness so much as the establishment of Yale in 1701. Virginia and Massachusetts were at once remote and different; Cambridge and New Haven were at least each in New England, and each dominated by strongly Puritan influences. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Yale began, these influences were more uniformly "stiff" in Connecticut than in the neighborhood of Boston. Indeed the relaxation of extreme orthodoxy at Harvard, as the first chapter of this book has indicated, bore an important part in the very origin of Yale, whose founders, insistent on an undiluted orthodoxy, were impelled by a more complicated motive than that of the founders of Harvard — "dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust."

There was, then, this important difference between Harvard and Yale in their beginnings — that Harvard owed its origin chiefly to the company of English clergymen who formed the most influential element among the founders of Massachusetts Bay, and that the corresponding group chiefly responsible for the establishment of Yale nearly seventy years later was made up of seventeenth-century graduates of Harvard. Most of the earliest Massachusetts ministers had received their training at the English Cambridge, — John Harvard, for example, was a member of Emmanuel College at the same time that Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard, was pursuing his studies at Magdalene, — some of them had entered the nonconformist ministry by way of Anglican orders, and all, despite what now appears their theological narrowness, had grown up under the expanding influences of the older civilization rooted in the English universities. Emigrants themselves, their academic descendants, the founders of Yale, were colonials — perhaps with the added

CLASSIC SHADES

vigor and intensity of an upbringing in the newest of new worlds, yet without an old-world background of their own, making in the long run for variety and a tolerance of varying types.

This is by no means to say that by the time Yale was established the colonial ministers in Massachusetts and Connecticut had not conformed in large measure to a common type. It is, however, to suggest that in the circumstances of their very beginnings there were the seeds for a greater development of individualism in thought and action at Harvard than at Yale — and that the academic history of more than two centuries has gone to confirm this difference in the opposing tendencies of a prevailing conformity at Yale and a prevailing “dissidence of dissent” at Harvard.

Should it be thought that this point is brought forward with any purpose of an implied claim to superiority, let me hasten to disavow such an intention. The point is mentioned merely as a curious historical circumstance, possibly suggesting a direction in which certain developments might have been expected to move, but certainly proving nothing. When it comes to

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

comparisons between the concrete English contributions to the two colleges in their infancy, the figure of Elihu Yale, "London capitalist and big wig," as a Yale historian defines him, towers above any English benefactor of Harvard, excepting only the name-giving John Harvard, who, after all, died a Puritan minister in New England.

There is, however, a link between the infant Harvard and the mother country which can hardly be ignored. As with "Harvard" and "Yale," it is another matter of naming, for Downing Street in London, the headquarters of the British Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a sense the very core of British rule and dominion, derives its name from that of a graduate of Harvard, a nephew of Governor John Winthrop, in the first of all its classes, 1642, a youth who became Sir George Downing, Member of Parliament and Ambassador to the Netherlands.

The tokens of a close relationship with England appear, besides, in many items of early Harvard nomenclature, now long vanished. Both names and things last longer in England

CLASSIC SHADES

than here. The Fellows' Gardens of the English colleges have survived many centuries; at Harvard the "Tutors' Orchard" was an object of the seventeenth only.

Through the eighteenth century the likenesses between Harvard and Yale were many and apparent — in matters of discipline, manners, and curriculum. The presence of Washington and his army in Cambridge in the early days of the Revolutionary War doubtless brought that struggle a little nearer home to the Cambridge than to the New Haven academy — for neither could be called more than that. In the spiritual and less obvious life of the two colleges, the sequelæ of the Revolutionary period, manifested especially in the displays of infidelity to which the French Revolution imparted a vogue of passing fashion, appear to have given more trouble at Yale than at Harvard. It is hard to shun the surmise that the latitudinarian spirit at Harvard, from which Yale had separated itself at the very beginning, a spirit which in the advancing eighteenth century must have been permeating the younger Harvard men who were to become the leaders

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

in the "Unitarian schism" of the early nineteenth century, had so affected the youth of Harvard as to make them more immune to the subversive doctrines from France — or at least to give those doctrines a less hideous aspect in the general eye.

Far be it from one of this later century to relate the French Revolution, and the promptings of Rousseau and Voltaire, with the beginnings of Unitarianism in New England! It is not wholly beside the point, however, to remember that while Timothy Dwight was causing the young infidels at Yale to abjure the errors of their ways, the forces of Calvinism were surrendering at Harvard to the pressure of more liberal thought, and that the appointment of the Reverend Henry Ware, an acknowledged Socinian, as Hollis Professor of Divinity in 1804, set the whole Unitarian controversy into active eruption and placed Harvard definitely on the side of "liberalism" as opposed to "orthodoxy." In a brief history of Harvard, J. Hayes Gardiner did not overstate the results of this action on the part of the Harvard Corporation when he wrote that "they cut the college off

CLASSIC SHADES

from the great majority of the people of New England and the rest of the country; and the slow growth of the University all through the middle of the century was in part due to the fact that it was regarded, and in large part was governed, as a seminary for the leading classes of Boston, who had almost universally adopted the new doctrines."

It has taken a long time to restore Harvard to the bosom of "the great majority of the people of New England and the rest of the country" — if indeed that has yet been accomplished. There lies before me, in an old collection of autographs, a letter, written from Richmond, December 11, 1813, by John Randolph of Roanoke to Josiah Quincy, who became president of Harvard sixteen years later, in direct succession to John Thornton Kirkland, president at the time of Randolph's letter. The following passage from it illustrates an outside view of Harvard which has not been confined to the observing Randolph: —

I had like to have forgotten to tell you that your University is decried in this quarter. The charge of Socinianism we once discussed together, but a heavier one is

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

now advanced against you, at least according to the maxims of this calculating age. 'T is said that your principal and professors take a pride in the extravagance of the students and encourage it, whilst Yale zealously inculcates the sublime truths of *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Be this as it may, some of our southern youths have left a great deal of cash at Cambridge and brought away nothing valuable in return for it. We are so much poorer in this quarter than you wealthy Bostonians that we smart under an expense which you would scarcely feel. Whilst the students are treated as gentlemen everything like profusion should be discountenanced by the Provost and his associates. I deemed it proper to apprise you of the fact that such reports are circulated and with some industry. They have been the means of sending some of our young men to Yale instead of Harvard College.

In the minds of many good nineteenth-century Americans, early and late, the double repute of Unitarianism and extravagance undoubtedly burdened Harvard with a heavy handicap. If the college, under its weight, was not to stagger and drop behind in the academic race, there was need of a strong counteracting force.

This was provided, I believe, by the spirit of the community in which the college happened to be placed, and by its good fortune in falling more than once under vigorous and progressive leadership. The spirit of the place, especially from the

CLASSIC SHADES

beginning of the nineteenth century onward, tended constantly, in a relatively liberal society, towards the more liberal, and surely the more individualistic, side in matters of opinion and conduct. Through nearly all of the first half of the nineteenth century, the two presidents that have already been named, Kirkland and Quincy, directed the destinies of the college. Kirkland was a clergyman, and Quincy the first entirely nonclerical man of affairs in the presidency of Harvard; and to them in turn the college owed the beginnings of the great changes ordinarily ascribed to the president whose forty years in office covered nearly the entire later third of the nineteenth century. Under Kirkland and Quincy definite approaches to the elective system amplified by President Eliot were made, and under Kirkland, whose general policies were continued and extended by Quincy, the professional schools, to which Eliot brought so much of effort and stimulus, were organized as units in the University contemplated, at least in name, before the end of the eighteenth century.

In the more than twenty years that elapsed, under half a dozen short-term presidents, be-

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

tween the administrations of Quincy and Eliot, — a time of widespread aridity in American education, — Harvard reverted in large measure to the prevailing status of New England colleges, with the academy more readily discernible than the university. But a time of general awakening was at hand. The decade following the Civil War marked a notable turning point, both in the creation of new institutions of higher learning and in the emergence of new commanding figures at the colleges already existing. The ripeness of the time in general and the ripeness of Charles William Eliot for the work to which he was destined coincided with a rare felicity.

II

The education of President Eliot for his work in the world began, in accordance with the familiar prescription of Dr. Holmes, long before his birth. His Harvard lineage was impeccable. Back of his father, Samuel Atkins Eliot, Treasurer of Harvard College for the eleven years ended with the graduation of his distinguished son, and thus a member of the Harvard Corporation, — that compact body of final

CLASSIC SHADES

authority in which a recent English observer has shrewdly recognized a "government by seven cousins, — extended a line of Eliots and Lymans reaching far back into New England history, with a goodly number of Eliots in the earlier Harvard classes. It is, by the way, an amusing circumstance that in the latest edition of the *Harvard Quinquennial Catalogue* (1925) an ingenious misprint gives the middle name of President Eliot's uncle, William *Havard* Eliot, of the Class of 1815, when it appears in the Index of Graduates at the end of the volume, as *Harvard* — as if to say that his family must not escape complete identification with the University.

Through the portraits of Stuart the type of Boston merchant to which the father of Charles W. Eliot belonged, with its manifest ruddy integrity of body and spirit, is auspiciously familiar. Born in Boston, March 20, 1834, under any westerly shadow cast by the Bulfinch State House, the boy got his early mental training in a private school under the Park Street Church and in the Boston Latin School, his church-going habits and his rational, orderly

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

religious education through regular attendance with his family at King's Chapel — the same shrine of Unitarianism nurtured on a modified Anglican Book of Common Prayer in which Dr. Holmes cultivated that corner of his soul's garden containing the plant "reverence" which he loved to have watered about once a week. Not until young Eliot had arrived at man's estate did financial misfortune overtake his father and abridge the pleasant indoor and outdoor activities of Boston winters and Nahant summers. But the roots of the son's being had already struck down so deep into what he described many years later as "the durable satisfactions of life" that outward circumstances had little power to disturb him. The personal handicaps of imperfect vision and the disfigurement of a facial birthmark were accepted with equal unconcern.

Even with eyes that cut him off from reading during a large portion of his junior year in Harvard College, the studious, self-contained youth graduated second in his Class of 1853. To mathematics and chemistry he gave as much of his time as the rigid curriculum of the day would permit, the more to chemistry through gaining

CLASSIC SHADES

access — while laboratories were still the sacred precincts of professors only — to the private laboratory of Professor Josiah P. Cooke. He applied himself besides to the mastery of written and spoken English, and trained his classmates in the singing of a graduation ode. For a year after the completion of his college course he was a tutor in mathematics, and then for five years Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Chemistry in the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard.

When this term of service came to an end, every impulse but that of domestic responsibility urged him, in 1863, to accept the offer of a lieutenant colonelcy of cavalry offered to him by the war governor of Massachusetts. But with a wife — Ellen Derby Peabody — and two children, his mother and his wife's mother, moreover, both being widows, he felt that he must not permit himself to become a soldier. Instead he went to Europe for a further study of chemistry and of processes of education different from our own. There was no telling where and when an expert's knowledge might not come into play.

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

Had he accepted another offer that came to him before his return to the United States in 1865 — to become superintendent of a cotton mill at Lowell, with prospects of a large financial reward — the European studies would have had no immediate bearing. The modestly paid professorship of chemistry on which he entered instead at the newly established Massachusetts Institute of Technology held his thoughts to the field of education — and the fruits of his thinking, shown forth in two articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February and March, 1869, are counted the *causa causans* of his election to the presidency of Harvard a few months later.

At that time contributions to the *Atlantic* were unsigned, and the articles entitled "The New Education; Its Organization" were no exception to this rule. Neither was a long poem, "Proud Music of the Sea-Storm," which preceded the February article, and ended its résumé of all musical sounds with a prophecy of

Poems, vaguely wafted in night air, uncaught, unwritten,
Which, let us go forth in the bold day, and write.

To-day the poem, generally known under a slightly different title, and with certain revisions,

CLASSIC SHADES

is as clearly Walt Whitman's as the article is Eliot's, but one was just as foreign as the other to the common magazine or other output of the time, and both were deliberate confrontations of a new day. The anonymity of *Atlantic* contributions was not so dark a secret but that the young professor in the Institute of Technology could easily be identified with the "New Education" articles. It was a new voice which spoke of "the recognized text-books, mostly of exquisite perverseness, but backed by the reputation of their authors and the capital of their publishers," and of "crude communities where hasty culture is as natural as fast eating." It was a voice both new and prophetic which declared that the American university has not yet "grown out of the soil," and proceeded: —

It cannot be transplanted from England or Germany in full leaf and bearing. It cannot be run up, like a cotton mill, in six months to meet a quick demand. Neither can it be created by the energetic use of the inspired editorial, the advertising circular, and the frequent telegram. Numbers do not constitute it, and no money can make it before its time. There is more of the University about the eight or ten Yale graduates who are studying in the Yale Department of Philosophy and the Arts, than in as many hundred raw youths who do not know more than a fair

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

grammar school may teach. When the American university appears, it will not be a copy of foreign institutions, or a hot-bed plant, but the slow and natural outgrowth of American social and political habits, and an expression of the average aims and ambitions of the better educated classes. The American college is an institution without a parallel; the American university will be equally original.

Though these articles on "The New Education" had to do primarily with the scientific, "practical" training of schools like the new Massachusetts Institute, it was not strange that, through passages such as the one just quoted, they gave the Harvard Corporation good reason to consider the writer, already well known for his character and scholarship, as a possible successor to President Thomas Hill, who resigned in September of 1868.

Accordingly the Corporation elected him in the following March to the vacant post. Under the regulations of the University the election had to be confirmed by the Board of Overseers, of which Eliot himself was then a member. This larger governing body, elected by the graduates of the College, might have been expected to welcome what has since come to be called a

CLASSIC SHADES

“progressive” in education. On the contrary, the Overseers at two meetings following soon upon Eliot’s election by the Corporation refused to ratify that action. But the Corporation persisted in its choice of a president, and on May 19 the Board, on the third time of asking, gave its consent to the election. It was highly characteristic of the magnanimity of the new president that in his Inaugural Address in the following October he expressed himself on this wise with respect to the functions of the Board of Overseers: “The Overseers should always hold toward the Corporation an attitude of suspicious vigilance. They ought always to be pushing and prying.”

The new “boy president,” as the many doubters liked to call him, was only thirty-five years old. Even after the lapse of nearly sixty years, his Inaugural Address conveys to the reader of it that sharp sense of youth which accompanies the forthright expressions of ideas perennially modern. It is an amazing document, its youthfulness of spirit tempered with the maturity of one who had thought much and clearly on the fundamentals of the problem he was about to

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

face; and it is even more amazing in the retrospect than it could have been at the moment of delivery, for it may now be read as one reads a programme not before but after a performance, when all the promises have been fulfilled.

It dealt with the functions of a university, and of Harvard in particular, with its programme and methods of studies, its forms of government, with the schools that feed the College, and with the community that has nurtured it and must be repaid in public duty. It was the charter for a new order of things in American education, a rallying cry for those who were looking forward, a disquieting noise to those who preferred looking back. To the believers in the imperfectly flexible curriculum of undergraduate studies then prevailing, how sacrilegious some of its sentences must have sounded! "When the revelation of his own peculiar taste and capacity comes to a young man, let him reverently give it welcome, thank God, and take courage. Thereafter he knows his way to happy enthusiastic work, and, God willing, to usefulness and success." The same note of liberation sounds again and again throughout the

CLASSIC SHADES

address. At the time of Eliot's retirement from the Harvard presidency, forty years later, a Phi Beta Kappa poet, Barrett Wendell, — who could be counted upon to disagree with him at many points, — bore testimony to the lifelong inveterate quality of optimism in him: —

Truly assured, when others doubted still,
That human good surpasses human ill.

And with the optimism went a confidence — when it came to his favorite subject of elective studies — which Wendell did not fail to note: —

Election
He held, almost with Calvin, was the one
Way to salvation, and he dared expect
Boys to be god-like, and like him to elect.

Read the Inaugural, and read Wendell's coolly appraising lines "De Præsides Magnifico," and, without exaggeration at either the beginning or the end of Eliot's long term of office, its achievements stand forth with a reasonable clarity of outline.

It is impossible in the compass of a brief study to trace the unhurried, unresting steps by which President Eliot, still obeying at eve the voice he

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

obeyed at prime, pressed on to his goal. The elements contributing to his great achievements were easy to recognize. First of all, there was the gift of an extraordinary personality. After his retirement from office Mr. John Jay Chapman wrote, "Twenty-five years from now, young men will be shamelessly asking, 'Who was President Eliot?'" And therefore many monographs and sketches of him ought to be written at once." It is true that personality is a hard thing to keep alive. But in this regard the chances of President Eliot are surely among the best. The picture of his noble presence, dignified by his height of more than six feet and by the carriage of one who made a lifelong practice of exercise in the open air, rowing, sailing, riding, both horse and bicycle; the sound of his distinctive voice, of a husky, quiet depth and richness that made it the perfect medium for the carefully chosen and measured words he was wont to utter — these are certain to remain vivid memories so long as any such things can last.

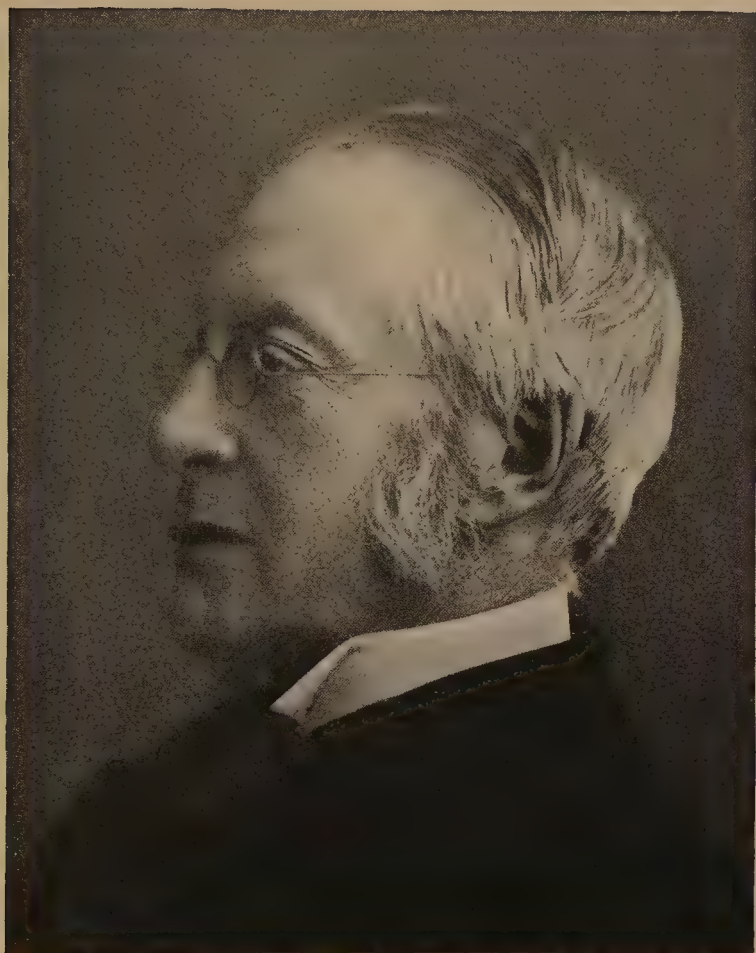
The manners of "a gentleman who is also a democrat" — and manners are surely to be counted among the expressions of personality —

CLASSIC SHADES

were the subject of a talk he once made to new students at Harvard. He knew these manners well, for they were his own. "Considerate attention," he said, "is always an important part of good manners." He was himself an inveterate asker of questions, but, unlike many such inquirers, he did not in the least resemble Pilate, who "would not stay for an answer." His listening was as notable as his asking, and that was so notorious as to become the subject of a significant anecdote, often told by word of mouth before it was printed in a posthumous book by the late Paul Revere Frothingham. This story has it that when the Reverend Leighton Parks one evening after a service in Appleton Chapel described to Phillips Brooks the impressive appearance of President Eliot standing in a front pew and singing lustily,

Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?

the chuckling comment of Brooks, quite alive to Eliot's Unitarian sympathies, was, "Asking for information probably." Upon his attentive listening for a reply Brooks would have been



CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

among the first to count. It was Eliot's unflinching habit, in faculty meetings and elsewhere, to give careful heed to all expressions of views opposed to his own, but, once his mind was made up, to employ every legitimate means to make his views prevail. His very fighting, however, was that of a great gentleman who observed all the rules of the game, and constantly played it on the terms suggested in the final sentence of a private letter written immediately after the election of President Harding: "When a good cause has been defeated, the only question its advocates need ask is, when can we fight again."

In another talk to new students he once recalled the advice he received from an old friend of his family at the time of his election as president. "Charles," said this friend, "I suppose you think that in your new office the first quality you will need is energy." "Why, yes," came the answer, "I thought that energy was likely to be needed." "No," said his elder friend, "that is not at all the first quality you will need. The first quality is patience, patience, patience." This, as Eliot went on to say, proved clearly to be the case.

CLASSIC SHADES

His patience was needed particularly in the overcoming of obstacles, often apparently insuperable. So far-reaching a programme of change as that which he proposed, and carried out, could not fail to excite opposition. This was strengthened through many years of his presidency by a positive personal unpopularity in one quarter after another. The established order is dear to the heart not only of university officials but of youth, and to do as many things to the College as Eliot did in the process of liberalizing it, and as many things to the professional schools in lifting them from relative unimportance to the high place they came to occupy under his nourishing and stimulating hand, was sure to provoke antagonism at many a turn. This was conquered only by long and slow degrees. When the Massachusetts Historical Society celebrated in 1923 the fiftieth anniversary of Eliot's becoming a member of it, he referred, in words which I have already quoted elsewhere, to the great change that had come to pass as he was nearing ninety: "In all the early part of my career as a teacher and an educational administrator I was much engaged in controversy,

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

not to say combat, and that at home as well as outside of Harvard. In all my public appearances during those years I had a vivid sense that I was addressing an adverse audience. Now to-day is a very delightful illustration of a change that has come over my experience. For twenty years past, I should think, I have found myself often in the presence of a favoring audience — of one that wished, at any rate, to agree with me, or, if they could not, regretted that they could not.”

Some measure of the unpopularity that had to be overcome must have sprung from an undeniable outward coolness of demeanor. The man whose balanced temperament permits him, as in the case of Eliot, to go quietly forward to the objects he has in view, unruffled by considerations personal to himself if only he draws nearer all the time to the final object, must look upon the common arts of popularity as quite aside from his main purpose; and this cannot be done without the payment of at least a temporary penalty. In an unreported speech at a club, devoted primarily to good-fellowship, which he joined at the age of seventy, I once heard him

CLASSIC SHADES

lament with a pathetic sincerity the fact that the necessity of working with unremitting intensity in his earlier years and the handicap of his eyesight had deprived him of human relationships in which he would have taken a keen enjoyment. The singer that was hushed in the youth who drilled his classmates in choral song seemed indeed to be speaking. As one saw him in the later years of his life under conditions favorable to friendly intercourse, his enjoyment in the give and take of talk and in the discussion of events, particularly in the light of their human implications, seemed to relegate the austerity with which he was commonly credited to the realm of fable.

The personality and the achievement of President Eliot were singularly consistent. Is not the greatness of a man indeed often to be measured by his unity? Certainly Eliot was of one quality and texture throughout — and the unit was inherently of an extent which would have made its restriction to the field of academic interests unthinkable. There were those who complained, and not without reason, that, especially as his years advanced, this specialist in

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

education showed a readiness to appear as a specialist in too many other fields — religion, politics, labor, health, war, and peace — human relationships of every kind. The astounding output of his published writings in the decade of his life between eighty and ninety speaks at once for the range of his interests, and, through the best of these writings, for the distinction of his thought and expression. The “Harvard Classics” and the memorial inscriptions in the writing of which he became the acknowledged master throughout the country; the pervading independence of spirit which made it as natural for him to adopt the mugwump position in politics as, for a single example, to resist the pressure of a Harvard President of the United States and Assistant Secretary of State on behalf of Harvard crews weakened on the eve of their race with Yale by the suspension of two members for an act of dishonesty at the College Library; his certainty to be found, for all his personal “superiority,” on the essentially democratic side of every question — it was precisely through such manifestations of his favorite quality of “serviceableness” that he came to occupy, long

CLASSIC SHADES

before his death, the place of "the first citizen" of the country, a place to which no single successor has yet appeared. Of course he was often misjudged — as by the Yale man who exclaimed after Harvard had won the Varsity boat race immediately following the episode just mentioned, "How in hell did old Eliot know that he was putting a better No. 2 into the boat!" The complete independence that brings buffets brings also its rewards, both outward and inward; and at the funeral service in Appleton Chapel, a few days after President Eliot's death at his beloved Northeast Harbor on August 22, 1926, the great company that joined in the singing of

How happy is he born and taught,
That serveth not another's will,

must have been at one in feeling that Sir Henry Wotton's noble words had never been more fully illustrated than in the life just ended.

It would be quite idle to attempt to repair the many omissions of so condensed a sketch as this. But the great felicity of President Eliot's domestic life must not go unmentioned. This was clouded by the death of his first wife at the

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

very time of his election to the presidency of Harvard. Two of his four sons had previously died in infancy. His second wife, Grace Mellen Hopkinson, to whom he was married in 1877, a helpmeet indeed, lived until 1924. His eldest son, Charles Eliot, died, at thirty-eight, in 1897. The father's biography of him, *Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect; a Lover of Nature and of His Kind*, is a memorable revelation of love and pride. The families of this son and of his younger brother, the Reverend Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, constituted a domestic circle in which a large element in the happiness of President Eliot's life was centred. If he applauded again and again the "durable satisfactions" of family life, it was because he knew whereof he spoke.

III

President Eliot retired from office in 1909, after forty years in the presidency, with seventeen years of extraordinary activity still before him. More than any other single person of his time he has stood before the world as the embodiment of Harvard, and, looking back over his whole career, Harvard men are proud to have it so.

CLASSIC SHADES

A witty graduate in one of the last classes of his administration has asked whether he should not now be studied in the light of a "superiority complex." The same question might be asked — though probably not many Harvard men will ask it — about Harvard itself. Let us admit that there was about Eliot — representative of Harvard as he was — a certain "walk and conversation," a certain appearance of self-sufficiency, a certain quiet assumption of being on the right track which held obvious seeds of irritation to others. Perhaps the most irritating thing about persons who create this impression is that they create also another — to the effect that if they do betray some "superiority" of attitude towards the rest of the world, it is only because, being genuinely aware of it, they would blush at the insincerity of trying too hard to conceal it. If there is thus, and after all, a kind of honesty about them which mitigates the offense of self-satisfaction, only the practising philosopher may be expected to admit it.

Now whether these remarks be limited in their application to a single figure or extended to the whole body of Harvard men, they are but

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

incidental to the towering personality and career of President Eliot. It is now acknowledged in many quarters that he carried some of his reforms too far, or at least did not shape them to the best serving of their own purpose. There is little doubt that the workings of the unrestricted elective system had unfortunate results for dull and lazy students, who were incapable of seizing its benefits, even if they did manage to lay hold on Harvard diplomas. If the exceptional man thrived under this system, the average man frequently suffered from it — and the problem of making a just distribution of the advantages of a university between the few and the many still awaits solution. The harnessing of the elective system, under President Lowell's far-seeing direction, and the later introduction of tutorial instruction, general examinations, and periods of voluntary reading, have all been aimed, through the nearly twenty years of their unfolding, ultimately at the conversion of the few into the many — or, in other words, towards increasing the number of those who take their studies seriously. Without the work of President Eliot which preceded all this, — and the Eliot

CLASSIC SHADES

pendulum may well have swung too far at times, — and especially without his achievement in assembling at Harvard a teaching force in which scholars of the first order felt at home, the present structure risen and rising on the university foundations laid by him could hardly have been erected.

It would be dangerous to venture far into the analogies of Harvard architecture, for there are serious pitfalls in that field. Yet the Roman emperor who found his city brick and left it marble can hardly escape all responsibility as an example to the president who found Harvard a college and left it a university. The credit for having wrought this change must be enlarged by remembering that the effects of Eliot's work extended indefinitely beyond his own university. A pioneer himself at home, he saw Harvard become a pioneer in many new paths of education. In colleges that were loudest in condemnation of his experiments in liberalization when he began to make them, these very ventures have now been followed so long that they begin to look old-fashioned. As in the universities, so in the schools, through every grade, Eliot's influence

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

has made itself directly or indirectly felt. His work has indeed affected the whole profession of teaching in the United States — and the whole multitude of the taught. To him, moreover, a large measure of the respect in which the office of college president is now held must be ascribed.

Through personality and character, through effective moral force on behalf of the liberal principles in which he saw the best hope for realizing the possibilities of men in such a democracy as ours, President Eliot is to be counted among the few men of his, as of any other, time in whom some of the attributes of actual greatness may be recognized. The man who possesses them all has hardly been known to persons now living. The man who has possessed so many of them as Charles William Eliot is a rarity in any period.

To speak of “the Harvard figure of Charles William Eliot,” and to celebrate him as the recognized embodiment of the spirit of his university, is by no means to forget that his native qualities and his own cultivation of them made

CLASSIC SHADES

him what he was, and that the debt of Harvard to him and his debt to Harvard are not capable of any precise measurement in terms of "the black" and "the red." His unique abilities and character — no more innocent of some vigorous prejudices than other strong characters — would have been certain to lift him above the herd in any surroundings; and of course the average son of Harvard is not to be likened to him any more accurately than the average son of America can be likened to Lincoln.

Yet in any comprehensive view of the tendency of Harvard through its long history, it is fairly to be said that Eliot stood for the same things which the college has contributed in general to the complicated pattern of our civilization. These are the qualities of individualism, diversity, nonconformity, and the consequent revulsion from restraints. The changeless thing about Harvard is that it is constantly changing, and that opinions within the Harvard circle are constantly at variance. In other colleges the virtues of working together to a common purpose have been more successfully nurtured, and American life has gained many things from this

THE HARVARD FIGURE OF ELIOT

unifying training of youth. But the country has needed also the independence which leads some of its sons out of the beaten paths. Harvard in the past has been able to claim many such spirits. What the future may hold for it, a prophet and not a chronicler must foretell.

Date Due

Mr 22 '38		
My 9 - '38		
My 28 '38		
S 1 '38		
Ja 21 '41		
My 3 '41		
Mar 20 '41		
Mr 13 '48		
MAR 4 '57		
FEB 20 59		
MAR 6 '59		
OC 3 '66		

MARYGROVE COLLEGE LIBRARY
Classic shades ; five leaders of
923.7 H83



3 1927 00127412 2

923.7 Howe, M.A. DeWolfe

AUTHOR

H83

Classic Shades

TITLE

DATE DUE

BORROWER'S NAME

923.7

H83

